

PRESS RELEASE

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Art in Public Places Program to Unveil Large-Scale Works By Six Renowned Artists at Miami Beach Convention Center

Projects present largest single commission by municipal percent-for-art program in the U.S.

MIAMI BEACH, FL, FEBRUARY 19, 2019 — The City of Miami Beach Art in Public Places Committee announces the debut of six permanent, site-specific permanent works of public art at the newly renovated and expanded Miami Beach Convention Center (MBCC). The works by artists—**Franz Ackermann** (Berlin), **Elmgreen & Dragset** (Berlin), **Ellen Harvey** (Brooklyn), **Joseph Kosuth** (London/New York), **Joep van Lieshout** (Rotterdam), and **Sarah Morris** (New York)—are a testament to the city’s commitment to presenting preeminent public art.

Produced with a municipally-funded percent-for-art contribution of \$7 million, the initiative collectively represents the largest municipal project of its kind to be installed in the United States. Notable for more than just its scale, the project grew out of a strident curatorial approach, requiring a complex and collaborative process that stretched over nearly four years from initial planning through artist and site selection to final installation. After a rigorous selection process that began with 524 applicants reviewed by the AIPP committee, the six chosen artists began fabrication processes that lasted up to 18 months. “These projects all speak the same language, flow in a coherent, creative fashion, play off each other, and are integrated in relationship to the building and to each other”, says Dennis Leyva, Art in Public Places Administrator. “The project will add to the city’s legacy as a vanguard for municipally-funded public art.”

The works are thoughtfully integrated throughout the new Convention Center so that they play off each other as well as the architectural space. While public art can often say little about its locale, these proposals were selected for their engagement with what makes Miami Beach unique. As Leyva and Brandi Reddick, City of Miami Beach Cultural Affairs Manager, explain in a joint curatorial statement:

“**Franz Ackermann’s** work *About Sand*, references Miami Beach as a global tourist destination and its beaches; **Elmgreen & Dragset**, with *Bent Pool*, take one of Miami Beach’s most famous architectural features, a swimming pool, and create a monumental arch; **Ellen Harvey’s**, *Atlantis* is directly inspired by Miami Beach’s unique connection to the many bodies of water that constitute the larger Florida ecosystem; *Located World, Miami Beach*, by **Joseph Kosuth** is a work that is configured in Miami Beach’s geographic relation to the rest of the world; the *Humanoids*, created by **Joep van Lieshout**, appear as abstract figures, which use the natural environment as their habitat, a subtle statement about the human relationship to nature; and **Sarah Morris’**, *Morris Lapidus*, references the architect Morris Lapidus, praised for designing some of Miami Beach’s most glamorous hotels.”

The series launched with a giant mural by Ackermann, unveiled on December 4th to coincide with Miami Art Week 2018 as a preview of the Convention Center works. Harvey, Kosuth, van Lieshout, and Morris will debut in April, 2019, followed by the installation of the Elmgreen & Dragset work in Winter 2019 to coincide with Miami Art Week. These works will increase the collection of the Art in Public Places to 21 pieces, highlights of which include permanent works already installed by Dan Graham, Roy Lichtenstein, and Tobias Rehberger.

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Artists' Project Descriptions

Franz Ackermann, (b. 1963, Germany)

Name of Artwork: *About Sand*

Location: Miami Beach Convention Center, Southeast Corner Exterior Walls

Franz Ackermann makes vibrant paintings and installations centered on themes of travel, tourism, globalization and urbanism. Ackermann has created large-scale dynamic installations that are built up from individual components comprising paintings, drawings, photographs, wall drawings and sculptural, billboard-like constructions. The places he depicts have a generic quality, and yet they look strangely familiar: non-places where the traveler's desire replaces the local culture. *About Sand* extends from Ackermann's long-running "Mental Maps" series. The "Mental Maps" series combines the factual precision of traditional street maps with the artists' own interpretation of the local environment. Rendered in vibrant colors and abstracted forms of sand, hourglasses and roadways, *About Sand* is his impressions of the city's tourism industry, commerce, urbanism and daily life.

Elmgreen & Dragset, Michael Elmgreen (b. 1961, Denmark) and Ingar Dragset (b. 1969, Norway)

Name of Artwork: *Bent Pool*

Location: Miami Beach Convention Center, Convention Center Park

Elmgreen & Dragset often reconfigure the aesthetics and contexts of familiar spaces and objects to challenge people's perceptions of them, so that they can experience them in new ways. Their artistic practice encompasses public works, sculptures, performances, and large scale installations that often emphasize the everyday or the insignificant, especially within the physical and social conventions of urban squares, parks, and in public institutions such as museums, hospitals, waiting rooms, and airports. Their work compares public places with people's domestic and private realms, in which individual lifestyles and desires are performed. With *Bent Pool*, the artists confront the conventional sculptural traditions of what an outdoor sculpture can be. Whereas public sculptures often commemorate historic events in a heroic way, this work turns an everyday domestic object into a monumental arch: a swimming pool, modified in its design and isolated from its functional context.

Ellen Harvey, (b. 1967, United Kingdom)

Name of Artwork: *Atlantis*

Location: Miami Beach Convention Center, Grand Ballroom Lobby

Based on a full-size hand-painted design that took the artist over a year to produce, *Atlantis* is directly inspired by Miami Beach's inherent connection to the many bodies of water that constitute the larger Florida ecosystem. Visitors to the Miami Beach Convention Center see themselves reflected in a dark watery 1,000 sq. ft. hand-painted design, sand-blasted into mouth-blown glass, filled with ceramic melting color, laminated to glass mirror with a white painting of a diagonal satellite view of Florida reaching from the Bay of Biscayne through the great watershed of the Everglades to Miami Beach and the Atlantic Ocean. As the light changes,

the image appears to float above and then be subsumed by the watery reflections, mimicking the intimate relationship between the city and the water table. The mirror is divided into two sections so that visitors enter the new Grand Ballroom at the intersection between the man-made and the natural landscape -- at the border between the Everglades National Park and the outskirts of Miami. Originally inspired by a visit to the Everglades with the Everglades Foundation and Creative Time, *Atlantis* allows visitors to situate themselves within the larger landscape, providing a poignant and thought-provoking overview of the natural beauties that make Miami Beach such a seductive destination.

Joseph Kosuth, (b. 1945, United States)

Name of Artwork: *Located World, Miami Beach*

Location: Miami Beach Convention Center, West Lobby

Located World, Miami Beach, is part of a series of works that Joseph Kosuth has also made in Europe and Japan that signify a sense of place through the abstractions of quantified meaning and query the impulse of the 'will to know' specifically where we are. In a sense the work is about how a community defines itself both within and without borders. The work is configured in its geographic relation to the rest of the world. Its specific location determines the size of the lettering of the place names represented in the work, whose graphic configuration is scaled in direct proportion to their distance from this global location; the closer a location is—in this case to Miami Beach—the larger it is graphically. This 'map of the world', consisting of signposts of cities and towns both arbitrarily chosen and purposefully included, becomes an alternative global network, reordering geopolitical privilege and prominence by flattening all difference to a matter of proximity versus distance, which is itself an unsatisfactory way of making meaning but one that reveals the constructed nature of our sense of place and belonging, all the more so due to the arbitrary basis of its inclusive procedure.

Joep van Lieshout, (b. 1963, The Netherlands)

Name of Artwork: *Humanoids*

Location: Miami Beach Convention Center, Collins Canal Park

The *Humanoids* in the Collins Canal Park are a classic representation of the work of Joep van Lieshout. Van Lieshout is a Dutch artist whose works reflect society, usually becoming destinations and serve as place markers in their environment.

The *Humanoids* created for the park in Miami Beach, are part of his ongoing fascination with man, machine and humanity. They appear as abstract figures, which use the park and the natural environment as their habitat, formulating a subtle statement about our relationship to nature and our origins. The sculptures will be placed throughout the park, along the canal and amidst the landtrees. The *Humanoids* invite visitors to engage, stimulate social interaction and contemplation, whether it be to use them as rendezvous spots, places to remember, sketch, write, think or talk about.

Sarah Morris, (b. 1967, United Kingdom)

Name of Artwork: *Morris Lapidus*

Location: Miami Beach Convention Center, North East and Grand Staircase Exterior Walls

Morris Lapidus is an expansive, site-specific artwork. Executed in custom fabricated, porcelain tile and covering over 7,000 square feet of exterior wall space, *Morris Lapidus* is one of the artist's largest permanent installations to date. Sarah Morris's dynamic visual language invites the viewer to reflect upon the concepts of motion, scale, light and social space through the use of vectors, points, color and geometric forms. Much like Morris's paintings and films, site-specific installations such as *Morris Lapidus* seek to decode and initiate new dialogues with the structures and concepts that define the built environment.

Morris's practice is rooted in the formulation of never-ending, all-encompassing networks of interlinked grids, forms, and colors that constantly expand beyond the immediate field of vision. In *Morris Lapidus*, this network extends further, into the public space. Delineating the edges of the building, *Morris Lapidus* challenges the meaning of the commercial space of the Miami Beach Convention Center, demanding that the spectator looks beyond the boundaries of their immediate field of vision. The artist uses two-dimensional grids that expand into three-dimensional forms to highlight existing connections that the location offers. The colors and shapes in the wall painting indicate a tempo that relates social change to the past as well as to the future. Referencing the architect Morris Lapidus, known for his use of display and commercial architecture of the hotel as a vernacular American form, Morris' work creates a confrontation of commercial, urban and social topologies, placing the consumer right in this field of tension.

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THE MIAMI BEACH ART IN PUBLIC PLACES PROGRAM is a City of Miami Beach program for commissioning public art. The program was created in 1984, with its ordinance adopted in 1995. The program allocates funds totaling 1.5% of all capital costs for City projects and joint private/public projects. Appointed by the City Commission, the AiPP Committee's seven members serve in an advisory capacity to the Mayor and City Commission. The program is administered and curated by Brandi Reddick, Cultural Affairs Program Manager and Dennis Leyva, Art in Public Places Administrator.

THE MIAMI BEACH CONVENTION CENTER RENOVATION & EXPANSION is a \$615 million project that will transform the area with a state-of-the-art convention center and public space, attracting new national and international events and conventions. The center's renovation is estimated to generate an economic impact of \$5 billion over 30 years.

<http://www.miamibeachconvention.com/>

Media Contact

For additional information, interview requests, and images of artwork, please contact:

David Simantov or Adam Mrlik
Blue Medium, Inc.

E: david@bluemedium.com / adam@bluemedium.com

T: +1 (212) 675-18