

# **Kathleen Hudspeth**

## **Proposal for A.I.M. Biennial**

### **Future Construct [Working Title]**

#### **Basic Description**

Future Construct will be a temporal, short-duration, site-specific installation of a paper sculptures at different locations within Matheson Hammock. The installation will be documented, and the work will persist through digital images, and perhaps also through objects.

The paper sculpture will be a small-scale paper reproduction of a concrete masonry block, created by hand by the artist from collagraph plates. The components used to assemble the sculpture will be intaglio-inked collagraph prints on an inexpensive paper. A small edition of these sculptures will be made specifically for the purpose of installing in the landscape of Matheson Hammock. They will be placed in water, in muck, in sand, along the shoreline, and nestled among the mangroves. The installation of these sculptures will contribute to their deterioration, as the paper will be susceptible to damage and destruction by water, dirt, or other environmental factors.

#### **Conceptual Underpinnings**

The concrete masonry block is one of the foundational units of construction for many of the buildings located in South Florida, and has several complex associations with both the place and the people.

In a series of works on paper (primarily prints) from 2016, I began to use both the concrete masonry block and the ceramic barrel tile as icons that were semantically keyed to the idea of the body—the way the body carries context, and the way it conveys representation of identity within a locale. These architectural signifiers are rampant throughout this region and offer an extension of regional identity. The block and the barrel tile function like characters in a scene, but also function as icons referring to status and structure.

Concrete is a material that contributes to the degradation of the environment through its production. The installation of paper replicas of concrete blocks will speak both to the dream of real-estate and development projections about this place—paper being the material most likely to historically support the genesis of plans for the future, and for ideas only existing in the conceptual phase—but also, as a deeper referent, to the difference between the renewable possibility of paper (wood and forestry) as a carbon sequestration technique, and that of concrete production, which produces the a significant amount of carbon and takes around a 10<sup>th</sup> of the world's industrial water use.

The damage to the paper sculptures caused by installing them within the landscape will conceptually allude to the effect of rising seas on individual structures and real estate and development in South Florida. The use of the icon as a signifier for human activity will refer to culture and habit in our region. The relationship of the printed multiple will evoke the fact that concrete blocks themselves are industrially produced multiples. The materials used will have a deeper conceptual significance to a

larger environmental discourse about material use and production; this portion of the content is not intended to be overt or primary content.

### **Locale and Poetics**

Matheson Hammock is a fragile, beautiful park from the era of Miami's early imagining of itself that is being destroyed by sea level rise and the resulting effects on the high tides. Much of the park is no longer usable, and areas that I frequented as a child are now inaccessible and much changed. The change to the waters of the bay because of global heating and fertilizer runoff has also affected the park's shoreline ecosystem, producing large mats of dead seagrass where there used to be clear, shallow waters populated with urchins and other sea life.

The work itself will be poetic in nature, striving for beauty and strangeness. The change of scale, and the change of material will contribute to make a sense of the dissimilar for the viewer, while the placement and aesthetic choices regarding the documentation are meant to strive for a sort of sorrowful, lonely beauty.

### **Environmental Effect**

The installation of paper sculptures will create no temporary or permanent damage to the park, will be entirely removable, will not leave behind detritus, and will be made of materials that also do no damage; traditional printmakers inks are made with refined flaxseed/linseed (plant-based) oils, and all pigments will be totally bound within the oils of the inks and will be unable to leach out.

### **Execution**

The work's execution will be in these stages (one month assumed working timeframe):

- 1) Creation of a maquette and production of collagraph plates
- 2) Printing the collagraph sculpture components
- 3) Assembling the collagraph components
- 4) Installation and documentation at different sites within Matheson Hammock (multiple visits)
- 5) Refinement of documentation appropriate to the goals and requirements of the A.I.M. Biennial

### **Reference images**



Collagraph Plate in the shape of a perspective concrete masonry block; the plate is made from a pressed paperboard, and the resulting prints.



Lost Bayhead, 10 3/8" x 11 3/4", gesso, gouache, chine collé, collagraph, oil-based split-fountain monotype. 2016.

The work above is an example of how I used the signifier of the concrete masonry block within a 2D space of imagination. The place is meant to be a future, degraded location in our region, and the block's lonely status as a sort of 'sole-survivor' is meant to visually refer to a short story I wrote, specifically this part:

*"A lone cinderblock found upon a rare island is like a glass slipper in a fairy tale, a fallen part of a larger temporary dream, one which we collectively dreamt, spinning happily in our fantasies until its eventual expiration."*



The image above is a digital photograph that I took in the Fall of 2019 depicting the view of the submerged road and blocked access to the "wading beach" at Matheson Hammock. The barricades towards the background of the image are already functioning in a way similar to how I want to use the paper sculpture of the concrete block—they are objects belonging to the world of construction and construction sites, existing in this serenely uncanny, fluid take-over by the bay of the roadway within the park.