

## NEWS RELEASE

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Cultural Programs of the National Academy of Sciences

### **Art Exhibition by Xavier Cortada to Open at NAS**

WASHINGTON – Cultural Programs of the National Academy of Sciences announces “Xavier Cortada: Climate Science Art,” an exhibition featuring Miami-based artist Xavier Cortada’s climate change-focused artwork from Miami-Dade County, Florida, and the North and South Poles, spanning from 2007 to the present. The exhibition opens on July 10, 2024, at the National Academy of Sciences and will remain on view through Dec. 31, 2024.

Cortada initiated “The Underwater,” a community-led climate action project to raise awareness about sea-level rise. It uses interactive public art installations, including yard signs, murals, and sustainable concrete markers, to reveal South Florida’s elevation, spark conversations, and spur civic engagement. Since launching “The Underwater” in 2018, Cortada has enlisted thousands of residents and students to look up their homes’ elevations and make yard signs. The artwork enables people to discover their neighborhood’s elevation above sea level and encourages them to explore how to get involved in local climate action. Several original artifacts from the project are on view in the exhibition.

The exhibition also features earlier examples of Cortada’s projects exploring ideas of global interconnectedness to raise awareness about the realities of climate change. He journeyed to the North and South Poles in 2007 and 2008, and these experiences heightened his desire to pivot his focus to the climate crisis. During the expeditions, he created various projects, including performance art, temporary art installations, ice sculptures, and paintings with water from Arctic and Antarctic Sea ice. He also planted flags as part of a participatory eco-art project to reclaim land for nature.

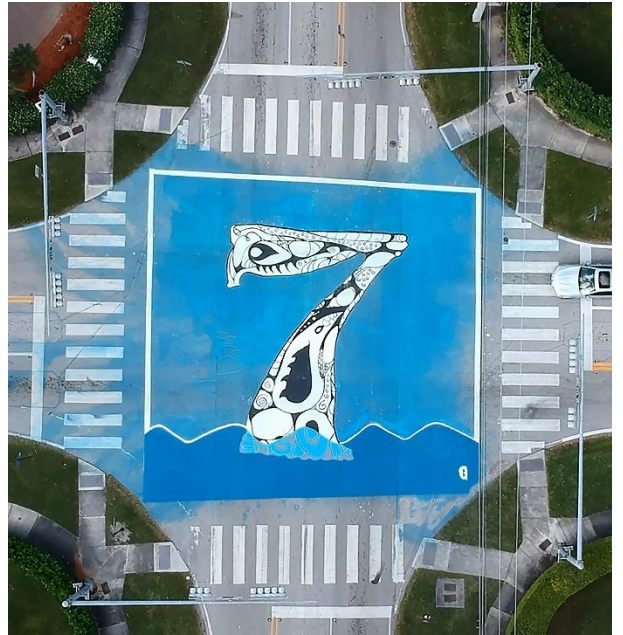
Xavier Cortada is a socially engaged artist who uses art’s elasticity to work across disciplines to involve communities in creative problem-solving. Over the last three decades, he has created more than 150 public artworks, installations, and collaborative murals across six continents and has made work at both Earth’s poles. Pioneering eco-art in Miami, his community-driven art has catalyzed over 25 acres of ecological restoration in Florida, yielded participatory projects in every Miami-Dade County public school and library, and sparked interdisciplinary initiatives to address sea-level rise. Through his non-profit, the Cortada Foundation, the Cuban American artist involves people in hands-on projects that generate awareness and inspire action around the climate crisis and other social justice issues. Cortada served as Miami-Dade County’s inaugural artist-in-residence and was inducted into the State of Florida Artists Hall of Fame. He is also a 2023 award recipient of the National Academies’ Eric and Wendy Schmidt Awards for Excellence in Science Communications, which honor exceptional science communicators, journalists, and research scientists who have developed creative, original work to communicate issues and advances in science, engineering, or medicine for the public. He earned bachelor’s, master’s, and law degrees from the University of Miami.

“Xavier Cortada: Climate Science Art” is on exhibit at the National Academy of Sciences, 2101 Constitution Ave., N.W., Washington, D.C. The building is open from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. on weekdays, and closed weekends and holidays. A photo ID is required. For more information, visit [www.cpnas.org](http://www.cpnas.org) and [www.cortada.com](http://www.cortada.com).

**Cultural Programs of the NAS** sponsors exhibitions, salons, theatrical readings, and other events that explore relationships among the arts and sciences. The NAS is a private, nonprofit institution that recognizes achievement in science by election to membership, and — with the National Academy of Engineering and the National Academy of Medicine — provides science, technology, and health policy advice to the federal government and other organizations.

**(Continues on page 2)**

## Press Images



**Left to right, top to bottom:** *Underwater HOA Elevation Yard Sign in front of Xavier Cortada's studio indicating that it is 8 feet above sea level, 2018; Underwater HOA Elevation Drive: 7, 2018, aerial photograph of paint on asphalt; Students Painting Underwater HOA Elevation Drive at the intersection of Killian Drive and 72<sup>nd</sup> Avenue, 2018; Xavier Cortada performing the Longitudinal Installation (at the South Pole), 2007.*

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