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## PRESS RELEASE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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### **City of Miami Beach Introduces New Department**

– *Creatively Engaging the Public in the Climate Change Conversation* –

**Miami Beach, FL** – The existential threat of climate change and sea level rise affects the City of Miami Beach and its residents in challenging ways.

Misael Soto, the city's first Art in Public Life Artist in Residence, in partnership with Oolite Arts, created the *Department of Reflection* exhibit to explore the questions and challenges that come from combatting climate change — bringing speculative, conceptual and artistic connection to these real-world challenges. On Saturday, September 14, the symbolic department opens its main office to the public from 2 p.m. to 6 p.m. at the Rotunda in Collins Park located at 2100 Collins Avenue.

"Soto's previous project of *Sand: Amphitheater, Theater, Arena*, provided a space for residents and visitors to discuss and reflect on the city's natural history," noted City Manager Jimmy L. Morales. "I'm excited to see how the *Department of Reflection* will build on the last exhibit by encouraging new ideas and bringing together different outlooks to our environmental challenges."

Understanding that the city's adaptation strategies is only part of the effort needed to address rising seas, Soto's project presents a foil, or reflection, of the municipality while simultaneously presenting creative moments of exchange between the city and its residents and visitors.

"Through the emblematic department, I'm hoping to continue to push the conversation surrounding climate change in an effort to provide clarity, and perhaps even some solutions, to a conversation that more often than not excludes the arts," noted Misael Soto.

*The Department* will be open to the public every Saturday from 2 p.m. to 6 p.m. Anyone is welcome to interact with the artist and gather a sense of Soto's process as well as sit and enjoy a selection from its library. Ranging from lectures and discussions to film screenings and performance art, event programming will be held every other Saturday from 2 p.m. to 3 p.m. through October.

Stay up to date on future programming put forth by *The Department* by visiting the events calendar at [www.MBArtsandCulture.org](http://www.MBArtsandCulture.org).

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**About the Artist**

Born in Puerto Rico in 1986, Misael Soto received an MFA from the School of Art Institute of Chicago and graduated Magna Cum Laude with a bachelor's degree in Art History from Florida Atlantic University. Beyond public artworks shown extensively for many years, Soto has exhibited at MCA Chicago, Open Engagement 2015, the Museum of Contemporary Art in North Miami, Material Art Fair in Mexico City, David Castillo Gallery in Miami, Museum of Art in Fort Lauderdale, and Young Art Museum I Davie, Florida, amongst others. Soto was awarded the South Florida Cultural Consortium Award for 2019 and an Ellie's Award from Oolite Arts in 2018. For more information, visit [www.misaelso.com](http://www.misaelso.com).