

MIAMIBEACH



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PRESS RELEASE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

June 6, 2018

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Photos: bit.ly/sotophotos

**Artist will help City of Miami Beach address sea level rise with new
ArtCenter/South Florida residency**

— *Misael Soto is ArtCenter and the City of Miami Beach's first Art in Public Life
resident* —

Miami Beach, FL – ArtCenter/South Florida and the City of Miami Beach have named their first Art in Public Life resident, who will provide a fresh perspective in helping the city address the challenge of sea level rise and improve its overall resiliency.

Visual Artist Misael Soto, who recently received a Master of Fine Arts degree from the School of the Art Institute of Chicago, will work both at City Hall and in his studio at nearby ArtCenter.

ArtCenter chose Soto because of the artist's approach to involving the community in new works, including in the November exhibition "Flood Relief." The installation on the Downtown Miami bayfront, commissioned by Miami-Dade Art in Public Places, used giant flood mitigation pumps, and performance events surrounding them, to create a spectacle that urged people to explore flood mitigation efforts.

"The community has been at the center of Misael's work. People can engage with the art, talk about it, learn from it and help push the conversation forward on issues – whether it's climate change in Miami or gentrification in Chicago," said Dennis Scholl, president and CEO of ArtCenter/South Florida. "With this residency, Misael can go deeper into one of the most important issues of our time."

The program is supported in part by the John S. and James L. Knight Foundation's Knight Arts Challenge, which funds the best ideas for bringing South Florida together through the arts.

Over the next year, Soto will be embedded in the City of Miami Beach, working directly with the City's Director of Environment and Sustainability as the City develops climate adaptation and mitigation programs and strategies. Miami Beach is proactively addressing sea level rise, its economic and social consequences, and other challenges faced by many cities in the 21st century. The city is investing \$500 million to raise roads

and install pumps to protect the island and the people who live there, and is also developing a comprehensive resiliency strategy. Soto plans to attend meetings, provide input, and, through his art, bring the community into the process.

“Miami Beach residents have seen the effects of sea level rise first hand. A problem this complex demands attention and solutions from all corners of our city. We’re excited to have Misael on board to help us reach more people and to harness his creativity on the issue,” said Miami Beach Mayor Dan Gelber.

ArtCenter/South Florida will work closely with the artist on the implementation of programming and art works throughout the residency period.

"This residency is a way for me, an artist, to get into the room with those who are making the decisions that affect people on the ground daily and contribute in multiple ways, primarily through my art," Soto said.

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 and the Museum of Art Fort Lauderdale, among others.

ABOUT ARTCENTER/SOUTH FLORIDA

Established in 1984, ArtCenter/South Florida is a non-profit that advances the knowledge and practice of contemporary visual arts and culture to an audience of approximately 80,000 people per year. ArtCenter/South Florida creates opportunities for experimentation and encourages the critical exchange of ideas through residencies, exhibitions, public programs, education and outreach. The residency programs include a Studio Residency Program, an International Exchange Program, a PRINTshop Residency Program, a Fellowship Program, the ARTSail Residency & Research Program and Art in Public Life Residency. Exhibitions and programs at ArtCenter/South Florida are made possible with the support of the Miami-Dade County Department of Cultural Affairs and the Cultural Affairs Council; the Miami-Dade County Mayor and Board of County Commissioners; the Miami Beach Mayor and City Commissioners; the State of Florida, Florida Department of State, Division of Cultural Affairs; the Florida Arts Council; the National Endowment for the Arts; and the John S. and James L. Knight Foundation.

For more information, visit www.artcentersf.org

ABOUT MIAMI BEACH

With an average year-round temperature of 75 degrees, Miami Beach blends the pleasures of a tropical island with that of a sophisticated metropolis. The 7.2 square mile urban-paradise is the pulse of South Florida. From walkable neighborhoods, white, sandy beaches, clear aquamarine waters, and an extensive park system to its rich Art Deco and MiMo history, fine dining, and diverse and unique entertainment and cultural offerings.

Miami Beach is where everyone wants to come to live, work and play. It is home to unique museums, the New World Symphony and Miami City Ballet, over 17,000 luxury, boutique and resort hotel rooms, 12 public parks, and the Miami Beach Convention Center.

On the front lines of climate change, Miami Beach is often hailed to be writing the book on sea level rise adaptation and mitigation through its estimated \$500 million stormwater infrastructure plan, which includes the aggressive installation of stormwater pumps, raising roads and elevating sea walls citywide.

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We are committed to providing excellent public service and safety to all who live, work and play in our vibrant, tropical, historic community.