

2015

Revisit and Revise: The Introspective Approach to Reclamation and Redevelopment in Miami's Urban Core

Jescelle Renee Major

Louisiana State University and Agricultural and Mechanical College

Follow this and additional works at: https://digitalcommons.lsu.edu/gradschool_theses



Part of the [Landscape Architecture Commons](#)

Recommended Citation

Major, Jescelle Renee, "Revisit and Revise: The Introspective Approach to Reclamation and Redevelopment in Miami's Urban Core" (2015). *LSU Master's Theses*. 93.

https://digitalcommons.lsu.edu/gradschool_theses/93

This Thesis is brought to you for free and open access by the Graduate School at LSU Digital Commons. It has been accepted for inclusion in LSU Master's Theses by an authorized graduate school editor of LSU Digital Commons. For more information, please contact gradetd@lsu.edu.

REVISIT AND REVISE:
THE INTROSPECTIVE APPROACH TO RECLAMATION AND REDEVELOPMENT IN
MIAMI'S URBAN CORE

A Thesis

Submitted to the Graduate Faculty of the
Louisiana State University and
Agricultural and Mechanical College
in partial fulfillment of the
requirements for the degree of
Master of Landscape Architecture

in

The Robert Reich School of Landscape Architecture

by
Jescelle R. Major
B.S., University of Florida, 2011
May 2015

Table of Contents

ABSTRACT.....	iii
INTRODUCTION.....	1
Current practice and trends.....	1
Expression in the built form.....	2
Present Conditions.....	4
CONTEXT.....	6
Miami: The Adolescent.....	7
Miami: The Era of Maturation.....	8
Miami: The Elder.....	9
METHODOLOGY.....	11
ADDRESSING THE STREET.....	13
MEDIATING SCALE.....	17
PATCHING ECOLOGIES.....	19
FINAL THOUGHTS.....	21
REFERENCES.....	22
VITA.....	24

Abstract

The human plays a vital role in the city and the city a vital role in the sustainability and resiliency of the future. It is imperative to explore all avenues for improvement and longevity. Now is the time to explore methods to strengthen the cities we have and the people who live there. This is especially true for coastal cities facing sea level rise and climate change. It is important now not to dwell on what we have lost but to seek methods for using the memory of a place to restore and build for the future. Recognizing there is a problem only means we have to seek solutions. Explored herein are the methods and rationale for categorizing the struggles of a city, in the case Miami, and using this new three-part exploration to find solutions. Developed within these pages is a three-part system focused on the street, shifts in scale and the patching of ecologies. The knowledge and theory for successful development exists and is collected here; the problems in the city and professional fields are clear and also collected here. The solutions then can be inferred. Because the knowledge and tools already exist introspection is the way to develop. Learning from the self, the city and humanity strengthens the urban core and ultimately strengthens our ability to ensure a promising future.

Introduction

Current practice and trends

The ability to revisit and revise yesterday's design decisions is one of the strongest tools for contemporary first world cities to employ while coping with population and economic decline or growth. Cities are hindered by the shortsightedness intrinsic to many decisions of the recent past. Many designs, or lack thereof, have resulted in abandoned, underused and underserved corners in development schemes- lost space. Similarly, numerous developments fail to provide adequate programming, ecological connectivity and cultural infrastructure and lend themselves to becoming yet another layer in the lost landscape. There are however a plethora of opportunities for designers and especially landscape architects to recognize failures, identify what a place could have been and make it so.

This idea of reimagining can begin to restore ecologies, address social injustices, and concentrate density in cities needing to expand, by looking inside its boundaries, as opposed to further land acquisition. While some solutions might be precise incisions into the landscape what I am suggesting is a broad paradigm shift among redevelopment strategies making the landscape architect an integral player in this process. If we challenge the orthodoxies currently reigning over design expression within Miami, we can draw using its strengths to embolden its relevancy and ensure its legacy. As Landscape Architects, or drawers of the land, set on living up to our discipline's cornerstones, we are qualified and obligated to mediate between nature, culture and systems. Essentially drawing, or in this context, redrawing a working and resilient landscape. More broadly as citizens of Miami, we are charged with ensuring that we have a resilient city that we can call home for years to come.

In a coastal metropolis like Miami, a place rich with history, culture and identity, how do we begin to see and draw and redraw the portrait of the city? How do we embrace history and place beyond object and analyze it in terms of the often-ignored urban scale?

Expression in the built form

Miami is a city of architecture.ⁱ It is also a living lab to introspectively explore design opportunities within the urban core to allow all facets of the city and its systems to prosper. Its coastal context and complementary geology and geography emphasize the pressures of sea level rise and the need for ecological restoration and cultural revitalization as a means of ensuring safety and sustainability. Miami's subtropical seaside position is a luxury not without the threats of hurricanes, flood and saltwater intrusion. Miami thrives on culture as much as it thirsts for the sea.

*"...Miami has become a dynamic and broadly American city that mixes the historically Anglo-dominated North and the Latin South, vividly presenting many characteristics of today's United States: cosmopolitanism, an ever-shifting balance between public and private interests, economic volatility, and environmental tightrope walking."*ⁱⁱ

We, as designers, policymakers and residents, must explore what the city looked like in its adolescence, what it currently looks like as it matures and project what it will look like as an elder. We have seen the postcards, but what does the untouched portrait of the city look like? Miami is often overshadowed by its own reputation and sunny skies. What happens when the things that keep people coming to Miami become the things that stunt its growth? There is a finite amount of water front properties that can be built while maintaining public space and views for each. These are characteristics highly sought after by Miami dwellers and visitors often seek but not a desire, which cannot be endlessly fulfilled. In his film, *Los Angeles Plays Itself*ⁱⁱⁱ, Thom Anderson explores the implications that perceptions and portrayals have on the structure

of a place, in his case the city of Los Angeles. Miami faces a similar trajectory. As with any unedited portrait, the raw image is not without its strengths. Miami has a vibrant art, music and food scene^{iv}. There is diversity in its' people, culture and expressions and biodiversity in its ecology. It mixes rich current stock with (recent) historical architecture and boasts unparalleled views and weather. However, the strengths cannot truly fill the frame or image. The complete composition requires that we show the dirt and grit, the less than glamorous aspects of the city. If we are to see Miami better, design her better, we must first see her clearly.

Massive influxes of tourists and immigrants feed the city, spur development and layer cultural histories. In 2014 alone, a recorded 14.5 million visitors came to the Greater Miami beaches region^v. While primarily serving as a funding channel, immigration and tourism should simultaneously invigorate the cultural landscape and garner opportunities to inform spatial decisions and development patterning. The artifacts and ideas brought to Miami's shores through tourism routes, trade networks and the like should all inform design if it is to honor its blending of people, culture and space. Further, knowing and acknowledging foreign and domestic neighbors allows us to live or work alongside each other, deepening this idea of introspective growth as opposed to more classic suburban sprawl and segregated typologies.

Local historic stock and the images of an adolescent city (a young Miami), can point to architecture grounded in climate sensitivity, design aesthetics and exoticism all unique to this southern metropolis. We can safely assume that current growth trends and development patterns invalidate the city's promises for future dwellers. The city can't sustain unbridled growth, unlimited hardscaping and ignorant and inconsiderate development along the city's coasts. A

coastal city is only as strong as its barriers, coastlines and foresight. There is only a view when there is something left to see.

Present Conditions

As with all things good, distinction is measured on a temporal scale, and Miami is rapidly running down the clock. Beyond what has been portrayed the city has its fair share of persistent demons including crime, homelessness, violence and danger. Frustrated, Miami ostracizes the pedestrian, making much of downtown menacing to the average person^{vi}. The city can only maintain its stature if it reacts to the ills of the city with a sense of urgency. Pretending does not constitute change but holistic design can. While design is the tool to employ in remedying and renewal, policy should pave the way.

The framework as it stands now is overdue for a change and developers need to be held to a different, stricter standard. Profit is no longer enough; significance requires a place to be popular, profitable, and aspirational^{vii}. The minimum requirements for design and development are no longer sufficient as the tides change, literally. Aspiration, the final requirement of placemaking, is what this coastal context deserves and should reach a level other cities could aspire to. Miami must demand better if it is to be one of the best.

While there are burdens there is also great fortune, as Miami is just maturing and ripe. It is already a global city, an identity to harvest and pursue in its physical expressions and manifestations. The theories that can inform and strengthen design and policy here have been

explored, they don't have to be invented but merely applied and enforced. Metrics have been taken and designers have drawn ideas for a strong and resilient future city. Its age also means that Miami can use its transition period for long-term benefit. It doesn't have to be like any other city, in fact it should lead the trend towards intelligent development. Miami should teach as well as it learns.

If the landscape of Miami can endeavor to bring cohesion to these disparate schools of thought, science and design the city should again be able to keep its promises- the ones made to ecological, social and economic stakeholders.

Going forward actions must be deliberate and immediate. If nobody denies the effectiveness of the multi-disciplinary effects on design outcomes, why is the input of these experts not mandatory on a fundamental and integral level? Future development in Miami should question whether it is encouraging responsible growth and whether the land is being managed in a way that it is respectful for people and place. Each new and or redevelopment project should prove that is worthy in its broader environmental and cultural visions, in its maintenance and longevity planning and its commitment to serving its context as well as itself. Whether public or private land, the overlaps inundate the city and are a foundation from which to build, not to raze and begin anew. We see the mixing of public and private space in many ways including financial investments, mixed-use developments even along sidewalks. Further ecosystems and social networks do not obey traditional political or neighborhood boundaries.

Context

Miami is a curation of the urban wild. It is a palimpsest of great architectural exploration and success. Miami boasts an ecology and geography unlike most. It is a place of flavor and spice from its people to its food to its sounds and colors. The brightness and richness of the tropics are evident in the plants, variation in the paint, and the blue of the vast sky and the myriad of skin tones. The color and texture is also a reminder of the Caribbean, Mediterranean and South American influences and settlement periods. It is powerful, scary and ever changing. It is on the cusp of either being great or being lost. Design and planning in this context have an instrumental role. Miami is uniquely on the edge and in the center of two worlds^{viii}. Miami's oolite,¹ or porous limestone base, offers the city a unique set of geological benefits and challenges. The flora and fauna in the region have their differences but resemble each other in innumerable ways, which can inform the way in architecture responds in this context and climate as well as culture.

Lost Space is a problem that plagues every city everywhere. Uniquely, Miami is situated perfectly a critical shifting point (in time, ideology and demand) in which it can revisit spaces that are lost and revise them accordingly. Designers and regulators are also afforded the opportunity to use lessons from failures and urban design theories to avoid create further or future lost spaces. As a point of clarification lost space in the circumstance is the leftover or residual space at the base of a garage or skyscraper, concentrations of surface parking lots, systemic interruptions to pedestrian activity and derelict or vacant land^{ix}. Vacancy in this case is negative because it doesn't have a neutral or positive effect on its surroundings in terms of

¹ Oolite-n. (Geology) limestone consisting of a mass of rounded grains (ooliths) made up of concentric layers.

ecology, function or perception. The greatest benefits to revisions in the lost space are the availability of growth without expansion, the resulting interconnected systems (i.e. transit) and improved symbiosis between spaces.

Miami: The Adolescent

Historically, Miami was a swampland. Over 10,000 years ago, along what is now Biscayne Bay, there was a settlement of Paleo-Indians. Many millennia later the Tequesta Indians began building settlements from the southern Florida Keys, through Miami to through the next county, Broward County, to the North^x.

In current discourse we rarely think of the inhabitation of Miami prior the 1800s or recent memory. The trajectory for the development of the city has been very swift and Miami, at least in the context we conceive of it now, is formally considered to be in the beginning of its centennial years. Much of the development the city was fueled by a technological mysticism that asserts the power of the human power over nature. Specifically, development has been rooted in the belief that technology, innovation and ingenuity can control the wild, harness it in purely advantageous ways and allow humankind to persist unscathed into the future. Some of these technological and engineering solutions included draining the swamps, digging canals and robust construction booms^{xi}.

The draining of land for agriculture and development required the diversion of the everglades at its headwaters. Land at the time was referred to as being sold by the gallon. It was a costly process in more ways than one and is now related to what is now the most expensive and intensive restoration projects in the country. The State of “Florida embarked on an ambitious program of Everglades drainage in 1906. ... Two years later, a dredge started digging a drainage ditch near the headwaters of the Miami River, and by 1913, the Miami Canal connected the river

with Lake Okeechobee, while the water from the swampland was carried out to sea along connecting waterways.^{xxii} This of course had devastating effects on the Everglades ecosystem, and fresh and salt-water interfacing.

Miami: The Era of Maturation

Statistically, Miami is at once a city with great prowess and great danger. It is the 10th most powerful U.S. city in terms of economic output, wages and population^{xiii}. In contrast, it is calculated that Miami is one of the most vulnerable flood zones globally (second most costly), threatened by great losses from flooding potentially totaling \$672 million in damages and loss^{xiv}. This sets up a particular set of constraints and opportunities.

Population and infrastructure continue to rise. The city of Miami has a population of 417,650 and the county was reported to have 2,617,176 residents in the 2013 census.^{xv} Comparatively^{xvi} Miami is much smaller in area and population than many other major American Cities, however, the growth trend is clear and definite. The skyline is always changing and construction tape and cranes are mainstays along the coast. In Miami, the most costly developments and most wealthy residents straddle the coasts, which in this case are the most vulnerable and valuable lands. It is said that 75% of the 5.5 million people living in South Florida live along the coasts^{xvii}. The coasts are valuable in terms of what is intrinsic to real estate but also in their proximity and the underlying and critical ecosystem health and safety.

Miami: The Elder

The elder, or future, Miami will undoubtedly be changed. Hopefully the changes will be positive in that the city would have converted lost space, addressed its problems and strengthened its systems in preparation and for prosperity.

Miami performs as a capital in many things boasting a unique start, as one of the only major cities whose founding is credited to a woman. It has one of the largest networks of international banking, an ever-busy port (shipping and cruising) and substantial international and domestic flights. Its cultural ties have been laced with race wars from its inception. More positively, however, all of the races including its indigenous people, conquerors, refugees and immigrants leave remnants contributing to its form an increase in its value and the distinction of the city. "...Understanding its urban and architectural landscape requires understanding the countless cities that overlap with its boundaries"^{xviii}. These 'cities' must be understood in their context both locally and by understanding the provenance of their assertions.

The urban core of Miami, as with many cities, is centered on a nucleus of the formal downtown. There is an opportunity here to end the parallels to the traditional city model in the quest of a new urban system. Brickell, the financial district, to the south and the arts districts to the north, borders Miami's downtown. The concentrated downtown and financial area is flanked by residential neighborhoods, all concentrated along Biscayne Boulevard (US 1) and the tangential arterial roads. By way of what can be referred to as maneuvering through its transitional phase, Miami can reinvent itself yet again. The strategy for transition can capitalize on the *mélange* of systems already at play public and private, cultural and ecological^{xix}.

"A new urban imagery must now seduce- one that is truly sustainable and meets the needs of the people who live there"^{xx}. This makes Miami an ideal candidate to apply this new

urban image, centered on design and underlying policy. Shifting into and densifying of the city can be a striking gesture for reform of its function and the desirability of urban life^{xxi}.

Methodology

As Ellen Ugucioni, Historic Preservation Officer of City of Miami wrote, preservation in Miami should be used to build context, conserve, restore and rebuild the built environment^{xxii}. Though she spoke in reference to built heritage the message is important for the preservation of ecosystems and place, including the social elements of all three. As a means of critically analyzing Miami's urban core standards should be established that address these notions.

Based on urban theories and the particular context of Biscayne Boulevard (US 1) the biggest and most immediate concerns about Miami's functionality and form are related to the ways in which it *addresses the street, mediates scales and patches ecologies*. As described in the collection of urban analysis titled *Miami*, the city is at once an edge and middle. This can be further distilled as a metaphor for US 1 a central road in its broad American context and history, truer so in its urban Miami context. The city maintains a largely coastal presence (edge) and the physical and social pulse for much of Miami's core (middle).

Metrics, objective guidelines and justifications have their place in Miami however, when analyzing a cultural landscape such as this, phenomenological observations and documentation serve as the source of the argument. Introspection requires subjectivity, especially in a place such as Miami that is both wild and refined. The analysis should not fit neatly in a box or formula thus a layering of the anecdotal, the theoretical and the empirical are required in making recommendations for the betterment of the place- a layering evident in the place itself.

Using the writings and drawings of urban theorists, film and observations as justification, the urban core of Miami is analyzed through this introspective lense. As a means of organization each of the defined categories; addressing streets, mediating scale and patching ecologies begin

by identifying problems followed by remedies previously and more objectively defined by theorists.

As the ultimate place to study the impact of history and placemaking through both short (local history) and deep (infused or transported history) this analysis can begin to underscore the metropolitan internationalism, and cultural depth as a means of gateway building between people and place, countries and spatial design and consequence. From this particular understanding of place come the design, policy and planning opportunities for placemaking.

Addressing The Street

“Streets in cities serve many purposes besides carrying vehicles, and city sidewalks- the pedestrian parts of the streets- serve many purposes besides carrying pedestrians^{xxiii}.” The traditional functionality of the street is to move people. The vehicle here is the element, which alternates between foot, bike and motor vehicle- the variable. City’s successes are often measured by how lively their streets are. Further, streets that provide travelers with things to see, participate in or experience are ideal. In the same vein, streets constantly riddled with traffic, uneasily navigated or barren negatively affect the character and perception of a city. Arguably, the major thoroughfares should effectively honor each vehicle and facilitate their coexistence^{xxiv}.

The street should negotiate the public and private realms providing transit streams to the masses, commuters and individuals. The complicated and delicate balance between personal space and social bonding is also important to remember, as we are ultimately, by nature, social beings. The balance becomes an ever-challenging dance as we begin to consider the continuous safety of the populace as well as the life of the city during nightfall. Cities like Miami are open 24 hours and require planners and designers to account for times like rush hour and periods of calm equally. Pedestrians are key to any successful street network and are of equal presence, as such, a system must carefully integrate and synchronize the two^{xxv}. Are the streets always pleasurable, or arguably pleasant, at all times of day for the majority of users? If the answer is no, intervention is necessary. Systems of streets are critical. Larger networks of traffic signals, pedestrian crossings and the overall streetscapes are guardians, keeping the chaos of urban life reasonably controlled^{xxvi}.

Due to the importance of streets, Biscayne Boulevard (US 1) serves as a strong transect and representative for Miami’s networks and is the main site of this study and analysis. Biscayne

preserves and perpetuates the memory of place history and scale. In solidifying a strong sustainable identity and brand for Miami the street is key. The roads are the bones and as such they must not be brittle. US 1 has the potential for grandeur as a mixed use pedestrian and transit way. The city has undertaken promising steps to improve public transit along Biscayne and expressed goals for increased pedestrianism. Its location is prime to spur further investment and connectivity. As an amplified version of Miami proper US 1 engages all the critical issues and can demonstrate the freedom, though counterintuitive, in strong policy, regulation and design of the street.

By increasing the legibility of Biscayne and making it more inclusionary for everyone it can begin to more fully support and underscore its regional prominence and importance. The presence of effective and deliberate signals, signage and wayfinding are ever important. Fortunately, Miami has a fairly consistent grid throughout its core. The grid works primarily North/ South and East/ West and is generally quickly understood to the casual onlooker. Important to note, there is collection of one-way streets in Downtown, which do have value, but seem to be at the root of any circulation confusion for drivers in the area. The formal grid however, might pose greater benefits to the pedestrian by exploring a method called split phasing. Split phasing allows points of safe crossing, free from any vehicle turning, along major thoroughfares. Employing this should at a minimum, be applied at critical and congested nodes and intersections. As an example, New York City introduced phasing in fall 2002 and made the initiative permanent in 2004^{xxvii}. Beyond the technical solutions, design solutions should also be used in establishing safe crossing and calmer traffic. Methods such as gateway treatments, chicanes and leading pedestrian intervals and refuges would be strong additions when

strategically placed along US 1. Medians and traffic lights are the most common techniques currently employed; as it stands they are not enough.

As a basic rule, studying the street should be done at eye-level, the most important scale for planning. Eye-level here is synonymous with the street, which is why it should be *addressed*^{xxviii}. At this finer grain of study we begin to understand what it takes to improve the quality of a place for both the group and the individual. The street moves cars and transverses massive scales but must always recognize the human dimension is paramount. The street is not purely about the movement of motor vehicles. Jan Gehl, in his writing of *Cities for People*, states that cities must provide good conditions for people to walk, stand, sit, watch, listen and talk. He goes on to explain that despite or regardless of other planning shortcomings the quality of urbanity at eye-level should be a clear and decisive tool in bettering everyday life^{xxix}.

Since no major street is complete without the essential sidewalk component it must be viewed as a tool and a stage. As Jane Jacobs describes it, the sidewalks are responsible for the safety of the city and allow people to either witness the drama of the scene or the contrasting barbarianism^{xxx}. As a lively drama is clearly preferable to barbarianism the effort must be taken to strengthen the sidewalks. Sidewalks in her views, as well as those of many other theorists, provide eyes on the street or safety. Sidewalks also help define place and encourage a positive perception of the city. Though respite should be available, the primary function of the sidewalk is the ever presence of, and options for, movement. Following the notion of mobility pedestrians both able bodied and physically challenged, should be able to move freely with limited obstacles detours and interruptions. Variety is good, as are points of interaction and service, but unnecessary blockages without clear purpose should be avoided^{xxxi}. In the same way that we clear the sidewalk for vehicles crossing into garages or delivery gates we must also remember

the foot, the bicycle and the wheelchair are just as important and the sidewalk should accommodate them in the same way.

In a city like Miami and a locale as inviting as Biscayne we are invited to be outside to engage in the views and the weather. This said architectural solutions should foster the inhabiting of outdoor spaces in a myriad of weather types, seasons and times of day. Architecture here refers to planting for shade, structure for shelter and space to animate. Architecture should begin to delineate the street, light the way, vegetate the path and set the rhythm of the city by way of the people^{xxxii}.

Safety and danger are both symptoms of life on the sidewalk. Safety is a result of visibility, multiplicity, and activity. Danger arises most prevalently when either of these things are lacking. A strong network of sidewalks, crossings and exchange with nearby buildings will aid in keeping eyes on the street and ultimately, everyone safe. Along the sidewalk, frontage and land use should vary^{xxxiii}. There needs to be diversity in the visuals along the street as well as the types of destinations available. Mixing uses brings different types of people to the area, invites peak traffic at different times and allows users to populate the space longer as they move from place to place or need to need.

Mediating Scale

Miami's topography and 'flatness' are very prominent and distinguished features of the city. This flatness also leads to the harshness and unsettling scenario when observing rapid changes to the very horizontal, low horizon and broad skies to the intensely vertical. This is true not only to the eye but to the human occupying such spaces. There are subsets of psychology based on environmental stimulus and situational awareness. While valid, the zest of the arguments is rooted in the fact that the human is not like the things that are built. The human is perfect and imperfect, it is sensitive and receptive, it is, or should be, the measure for successful shifts in scale. The modern movements in architecture often eliminate the human as a design tool. When people then go to occupy the space they don't fit, the scale doesn't make sense. This is because the human " doesn't fit the cliché of modernity it is warm, intimate, social"^{xxxiv}

As people move from rural communities into cities at faster and faster rates it is no wonder buildings are becoming more vertical, they need to accommodate more people with lesser opportunities for Greenfield development. The cultural and physical shifts into cities are important for resiliency and longevity planning for the place. This however, is not without its problems and must consider the critical intersections and shifts from the ultra horizontal to potent verticals, rapidly.

As it is the crux of this particular study on introspective development, density, volume and height will all continue to increase. What is important to remember here is that the design code and policy remembers the human that dwells in the city. The human is responsible for animating the city, governing the city as well as serving as the economic drivers.

Mediating scale offers opportunities to bridge the other facets of urban networks including ecological conservation and the making of strong streetscapes. Vegetation also offers

an entirely new palette and plethora of opportunities to liaise between spaces. The incorporation of plant can only improve public meeting space, which is the ultimate goal of any city, or should be anyway. Mediating scale here, in the public and in-between spaces, improves negotiations between cars, pedestrians built and natural. It also helps to afford city dwellers with the chances for occasional meeting places, resting places and areas of solace and retreat. This also gives new life and purpose to vacant, contest or lost space within the core.

Most importantly in addressing how a cityscape moves in scales it not only better responds to the human, or key actor, it takes into account the ecology of a place and provides numerous advantages to the quality of life a place can provide. In enriching the city through space negotiations designers and planners can improve safety through things such as visibility and lighting. Structures, both planted and constructed can began to aid in weather protection (shade, rain cover etc), they can also aid in defining space. Which is critical in allowing our perception to conveniently move from one scale or place to the next.

Lastly, mediation not only occurs in the physical but also in our interactions. What we design can be filtered down into mediations and consensus building between disciplines. As we blur the edges between land and building, city and place so to do the edges between professions. With this attitude, small projects, restrained budgets and small spaces can be radically transformed and serve as large or system scale improvements.

Patching Ecologies

The study of the land itself is probably the most innate to the repertoire of the Landscape Architect. Because of the innate ability and frankly the obligation to protecting the land the role of the landscape architect should be a leading one. This however does not eliminate the need for any of the other players at the table. It is most importantly an opportunity for everyone to become educated on what our conditions really are and how to best work with the. There is a concerning lack of conversation, in urban, coastal, Miami surrounding climate change and sea-level rise. This is a massive problem. There is unparalleled ecological history and presence in Miami that is ignored and misunderstood. This is a bigger problem. In a city faced with very real environmental threats such as aquifer depletion and contamination, saltwater intrusion and hurricane paths the city is drastically under-prepared.

The shift in conversation surround Miami's ecological context and quality should hinge on the viability of all the remaining nature, gardens and unclaimed space going forward. We have unmatched growing seasons, a vast planting palette, supportive growth climates and conditions and yet it is under-utilized. We have great opportunities to use the sun and wind to our advantage. And yet the current policy, maintenance and accountability measures are not up to par.

Bringing landscape and nature to the forefront is a great opportunity to secure the city, to combat the elements and to restore some of the unique and wild that was here before us, sheltering the land for harm. We also have opportunities to re-brand the city, increase the aesthetic and property values all while adding stability to our threatened major American city. The focused need to be shifted with the core and within our natural setting and cues if we are to be prepared. It is no longer about the pristine. We should not be crippled by what we have lost

but rather find the spaces and memories that remain and re-introduce them in ways that make sense with our current, urban wild,^{xxxv}.

Final Thoughts

Planning has traditional been addressed at to small or too generic a scale. Having a nuanced approach, a poetic method of urban renewal or reinvigoration allows us to have much deeper impact. City dwellers are human and nuanced and ecologies are the same. It only makes sense that a system that wants to foster and environment for them both would endeavor to work in that same way. There is urgency as the time scales have been naturally and anthropogenically adjusted.

Among all of the lost space there is no room for ego or remorse, only determination to be better and build better. Really understanding the history of a place and the present philosophies, movements (physical, cultural and political) and divers for the people of this time are essential in making future successful cities. Designing in vacuums has proven failure. We must, absolutely, design between professions between land and sea and between past and future. As Miami matures so to must its response and development techniques. We have the ability now to revisit; analyze what our current situation is and how we arrived there. We also, powerfully, have the ability to revise, re-imagining our failures and ensuring our future.

References

- ⁱ Shulman, Allan T, Randall C Robinson, and James F Donnelly. *Miami Architecture: An AIA Guide Featuring Downtown, the Beaches, and Coconut Grove*. University Press of Florida, 2010.
- ⁱⁱ Alayo, Juan. *Miami*. CLOG, 2013.102.
- ⁱⁱⁱ Andersen, Thom, and Encke M King. 2004. *Los Angeles Plays Itself*. Modcinema. com.
- ^{iv} Bonner, Rose. *Miami*. CLOG, 2013. 25
- ^v "Research & Statistics." Research & Statistics. Accessed March 30, 2015. <http://www.miamiandbeaches.com/sitecore/content/partners/tools-and-resources/research-and-statistics>.
- ^{vi} Bonner, Rose. *Miami*. CLOG, 2013. 25
- ^{vii} Alayo, Juan. *Miami*. CLOG, 2013. 102.
- ^{viii} Cure, Adibe and Penabad, Carie. *Miami*. CLOG, 2013. 11.
- ^{ix} Trancik, Roger. *Finding Lost Space: Theories of Urban Design*. New York: Van Nostrand Reinhold, 1986. 3-5.
- ^x George, Paul. "Miami: One Hundred Years of History." HistoryMiami. Accessed March 31, 2015. <http://www.historymiami.org/research-miami/topics/history-of-miami/>.
- ^{xi} Goodell, Jeff. "Goodbye, Miami." *Rolling Stone*, June 20, 2013.
- ^{xii} George, Paul. "Miami: One Hundred Years of History." HistoryMiami. Accessed March 31, 2015. <http://www.historymiami.org/research-miami/topics/history-of-miami/>.
- ^{xiii} Florida, Richard. "America's Most Powerful Global Cities." CITYLAB. May 9, 2012. Accessed March 5, 2015. <http://www.citylab.com/work/2012/05/americas-most-powerful-global-cities/1904/>.
- ^{xiv} Badger, Emily. "3 U.S. Cities Are Among the World's Most Vulnerable to Flood Disasters." CITYLAB. August 20, 2013. Accessed March 5, 2015. <http://www.citylab.com/work/2013/08/3-us-cities-are-among-worlds-most-vulnerable-flood-disasters/6604/>.
- ^{xv} "United States Census Bureau." Miami-Dade County QuickFacts from the US Census Bureau. Accessed March 20, 2015.
- ^{xvi} Contributors. *Miami*. CLOG, 2013. 20.

- ^{xvii} Goodell, Jeff. "Goodbye, Miami." *Rolling Stone*, June 20, 2013.
- ^{xviii} Orensanz, Felipe and Zooburbia. *Miami*. CLOG, 2013. 13.
- ^{xix} Benjamin, Malik. *Miami*. CLOG, 2013. 57.
- ^{xx} Bonner, Rose. *Miami*. CLOG, 2013. 25
- ^{xxi} Bonner, Rose. *Miami*. CLOG, 2013. 25
- ^{xxii} Contributors. *Miami*. CLOG, 2013. Foreward
- ^{xxiii} Jacobs, Jane. *The Death and Life of Great American Cities*. 37.
- ^{xxiv} Ascher, Kate, and Wendy Marech. *The Works: Anatomy of a City*. New York: Penguin Press, 2005. 3.
- ^{xxv} Ascher, Kate, and Wendy Marech. *The Works: Anatomy of a City*. New York: Penguin Press, 2005. 3.
- ^{xxvi} Ascher, Kate, and Wendy Marech. *The Works: Anatomy of a City*. New York: Penguin Press, 2005. 1.
- ^{xxvii} Ascher, Kate, and Wendy Marech. *The Works: Anatomy of a City*. New York: Penguin Press, 2005. 7.
- ^{xxviii} Gehl, Jan. *Cities for People*. Washington, DC: Island Press, 2010. 18.
- ^{xxix} Gehl, Jan. *Cities for People*. Washington, DC: Island Press, 2010. 118.
- ^{xxx} Jacobs, Jane. *The Death and Life of Great American Cities*. 37.
- ^{xxxi} Gehl, Jan. *Cities for People*. Washington, DC: Island Press, 2010. 123.
- ^{xxxii} Gehl, Jan. *Cities for People*. Washington, DC: Island Press, 2010. 129.
- ^{xxxiii} Jacobs, Jane. *The Death and Life of Great American Cities*. 217.
- ^{xxxiv} *The Human Scale*. 2012. Film.
- ^{xxxv} Marris, Emma. *Rambunctious Garden: Saving Nature in a Post-wild World*. New York: Bloomsbury, 2011. 1.

Vita

Jescelle Major began developing her interests in arts and design at a young age. She embarked on a focused design education at a magnet high school and from there went on to undergraduate studies at the University of Florida. She began on an architecture track before being accepted into the then new, sustainability program in the College of Design, Construction and Planning. She graduated early with her B.S in sustainability in the Built Environment.

Throughout her education and after Jescelle pursued many extracurricular activities, engaged with charity organizations, interned and worked. Most of her work experience is in the public sector. She has worked for the government at the city level in both the public works and parks and recreation departments in various roles. She has also been a curatorial intern at a renowned art museum and most recently was a planning intern at Denver Zoo. Her passions reach from the small-scale design interventions to urban scale problem solving. She is committed to making thorough and deliberate design moves and decisions. She endeavors to bring a fresh and innovative perspective when creating solutions to serve the greater good.