



Rocco Ceo - “Natural Acts”

Exhibition:
09/12/15 - 10/10/15

Curators:
Rocco Ceo, Veruska Vasconez & Philippe Bonnery

Designers:
Veruska Vasconez & Philippe Bonnery



Natural Acts

We often think of nature as removed from us, something we view from a distance, sometimes inhabit and mostly feel is under our control. When the balance of nature is upset - it starts to control us - often harshly and without mercy. But we are nature - with all its unpredictability and its defiant, symbiotic need to connect everything.

Natural Acts is paradoxically about looking at nature - as a part of it. (It is paradoxical to be both observer and participant). So animals are doing "human" things, people and animals are morphed into one likeness, and trees are given the singular and important status of people. The architectural projects are to underscore that all architecture is made from nature. We just shape nature, make its form usable, assemble it and maintain it. From the moment architecture is made nature through weathering, returns it to its raw state before it was transformed by our hands.

The range of depiction of the subjects and mediums, from black and white to color, suggest the diverse figurative identity that nature can have - from the reflective and precious lines of silverpoint to the dark and sooty world of charcoal.

The work on display illuminates the connections and relationships latent in all things. Balance, a natural goal of all things, can only be achieved when the notion that "we are nature" is embraced.

Jungle Floor

30' x 4', charcoal on Fabriano artistico hot press
2015
\$55 000



Jungle Floor

In 2009 I taught a course at the University of Miami, School of Architecture that had as its subject the documentation of one of South Florida's oldest attraction gardens, Fennell's Orchid Jungle (1922) now known as Hattie Bauer Preserve. A hearty group of seven students commuted a couple of days a week to suffer the mosquitoes and oppressive August humidity to carefully research, measure and draw hundreds of trees that comprised the 'elevated place' of the dense hardwood hammock. What we saw were buttressing root systems that wandered great distances over pitted oolitic ground in search of soil and water, to support amongst other things; Strangler Fig, ancient Live Oak, towering Willow Mastic and Inkwood, Poison wood, and clawed Pigeon Plum trees. Together these trees formed a unique, cool, island-like retreat that stood in stark contrast to what was once the endless Pine Rocklands that dominated the area. Marinated in DEET infused mosquito repellent, we stead-

fastly located hundreds of trees, making an accurate set of drawings of the site's existing conditions and together with its history submitted it to the Library of Congress, Historic American Landscape Survey/HALS program. What we could not fully document was the complexity of its ground plane.

The jungle-like forest, and the unique ground plane that is its foundation, stuck with me and I vowed to one day go back on my own and draw what was not documented. Knowing a little about the region's history, I wanted at the very least to make a record of what might have been there before dynamite, the rock plow, and eventually the bulldozer and steamroller did their efficient damage - transforming dodgy footing of a treacherous but beautiful landscape into agricultural fields accessed by a paved lattice of country roads.

I wanted some record of what the first settlers might have cursed or cherished, but at the very least respected, before land speculation all but erased its existence.

We are fortunate today that through the vision of William Matheson, Charles Deering, Charles Torrey Simpson, L.A. Fennell and his family, and others, that we can still experience some aspect of what the early days were like before we irreversibly changed it.

The drawing presented here represents this ground at actual size, 'one-to-one', so that in image and scale, it is something like the thing it represents. Presented horizontally and located in the gallery the same way it exists in the field, (on an east west line), it also references our single-minded pursuit of cheaper land and relentless paving of an east/west path from the waterfront to the Everglades (the other waterfront).

Its sidewalk-like dimensions in width, length and regularity, contrast with the buttressing roots and solution holes drawn on its surface.

The drawing is about line, mass, shade and shadow, and how mottled light focuses our attention on detail in a varied landscape. It is a thesis of leaves and roots, line making, and necessity if not the joy of looking at the ground again. You will see many things in it. I hope you enjoy looking at it as much as I have had making it - but most importantly I hope you seek it out 'see it in the flesh' and champion its preservation.....so we are not just left with this drawing. -

Thanks to Veruska Vasconez for encouraging me to 'take-this-drawing-on' and offering the space to make it. Thanks also to Denis Hector, Philippe Bonnery and William Hector for helping build the platform on which it is presented.

Jungle Floor
detail



Charlotte

22" x 30", charcoal, Fabriano hot press
2015
\$3 000



Totem

21" x 31 3/4", charcoal, Newsprint
2015
\$3 000



Poke Weed

24" x 47", graphite, Artistic hot press

2015

\$6 000

13



14

The two paths

27 3/4" x 20", charcoal, Fabriano hot press

2015

\$4 000

15



16

Oxygen

27 3/4" x 20", charcoal, Fabriano hot press

2015

\$4 000

17



18

Dade County Pine

14 3/4"x19 1/2", India Ink on Fabriano hot press

2000

\$3 500

19



20

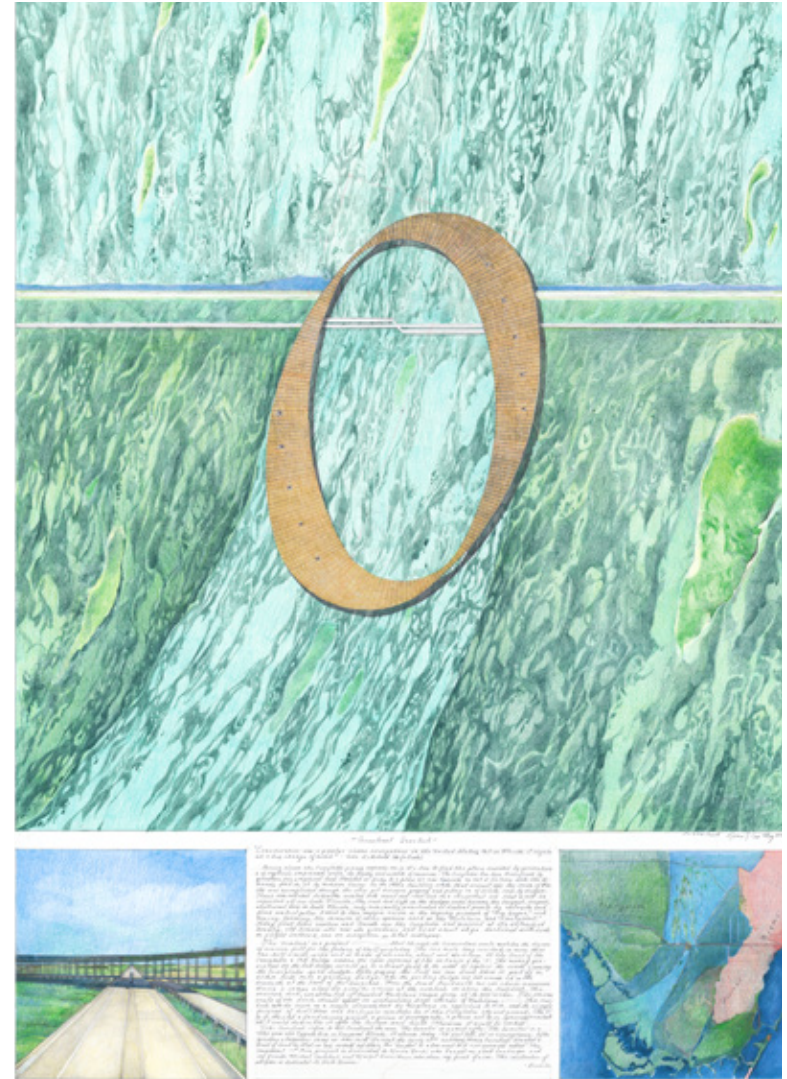
Everglades Overlook

22" x 30", colored pencil on Fabriano hot press

2000

\$5 000

21



22

Cuban Belly Palm

22"x 30", colored pencil on Fabriano hot press

2015

\$5 000

23



24

Silver Palm

22"x 30" colored pencil on Fabriano hot press

1996

\$5 000

25



26

Chokoloskee Gumbo Limbo

22"x 20", colored pencil on Fabriano hot press
1996, 1999, 2000
\$4 500



Live Oak

24 1/2" x 28 3/4", colored pencil on bond paper

1990

\$4 000

29



30

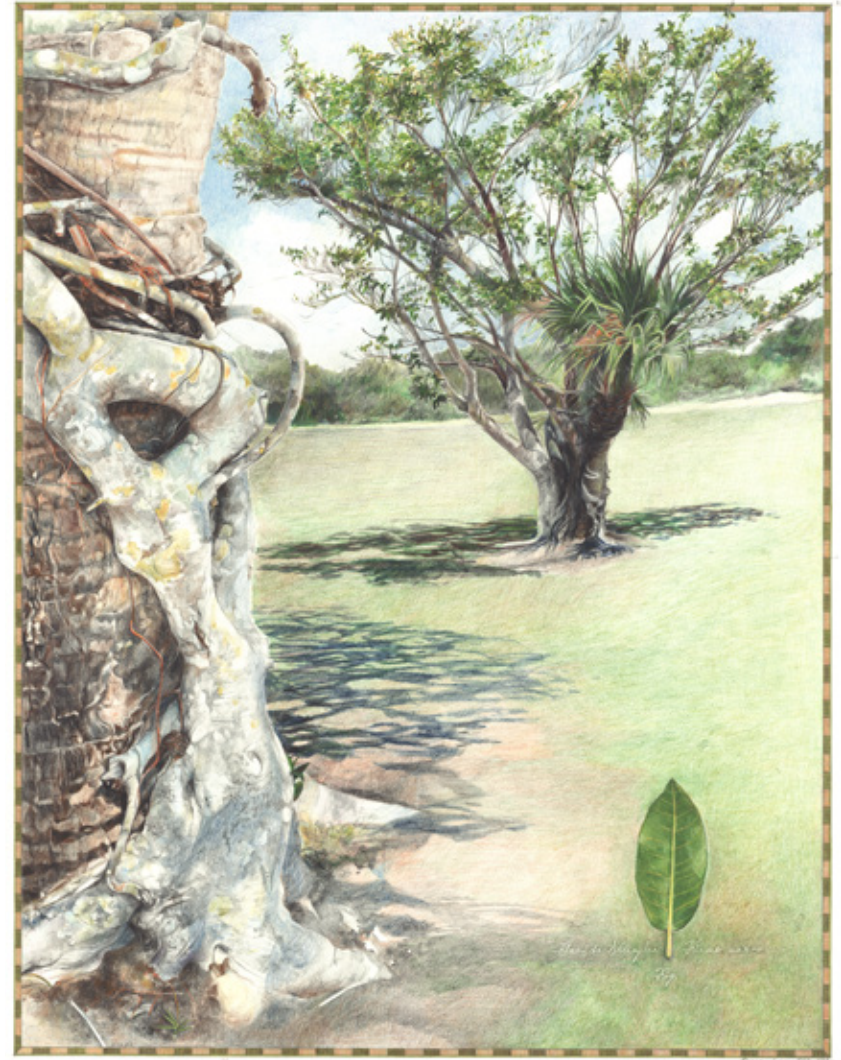
Strangler Fig

22"x 30", colored pencil on Fabriano hot press.

1998

\$6 000

31



32

Balsa Tree

23 1/2" x 16 1/8", colored pencil on bond

2015

\$5 000



Maleluca allegory

36" x 18", colored pencil on bond

2000

\$14 000



Gumbo Limbo detail

16" x 11 1/2", colored pencil on Fabriano hot press.

2001

\$4 000



Ficus, Gumbo Limbo

Gumbo Limbo, Ficus sphenocarpa (L.)

Art by the artist 2001

Strangler Fig Leaf – You better change your ways

4 1/4" x 11 3/4", colored pencil on Fabriano hot press.

2015

\$4 000



"YOU BETTER CHANGE YOUR WAYS"

FIGUE AVNER

ROGGO GEO

'95'



5 O'clock

22" x 30", colored pencil on Fabriano hot Press.

2015

\$6 000

Playing Possum

5 1/2" x 8 1/2", silverpoint on prepared paper.

2015

\$1 500

43



© 2015

44

Skull

6" x 6", silverpoint on prepared board.

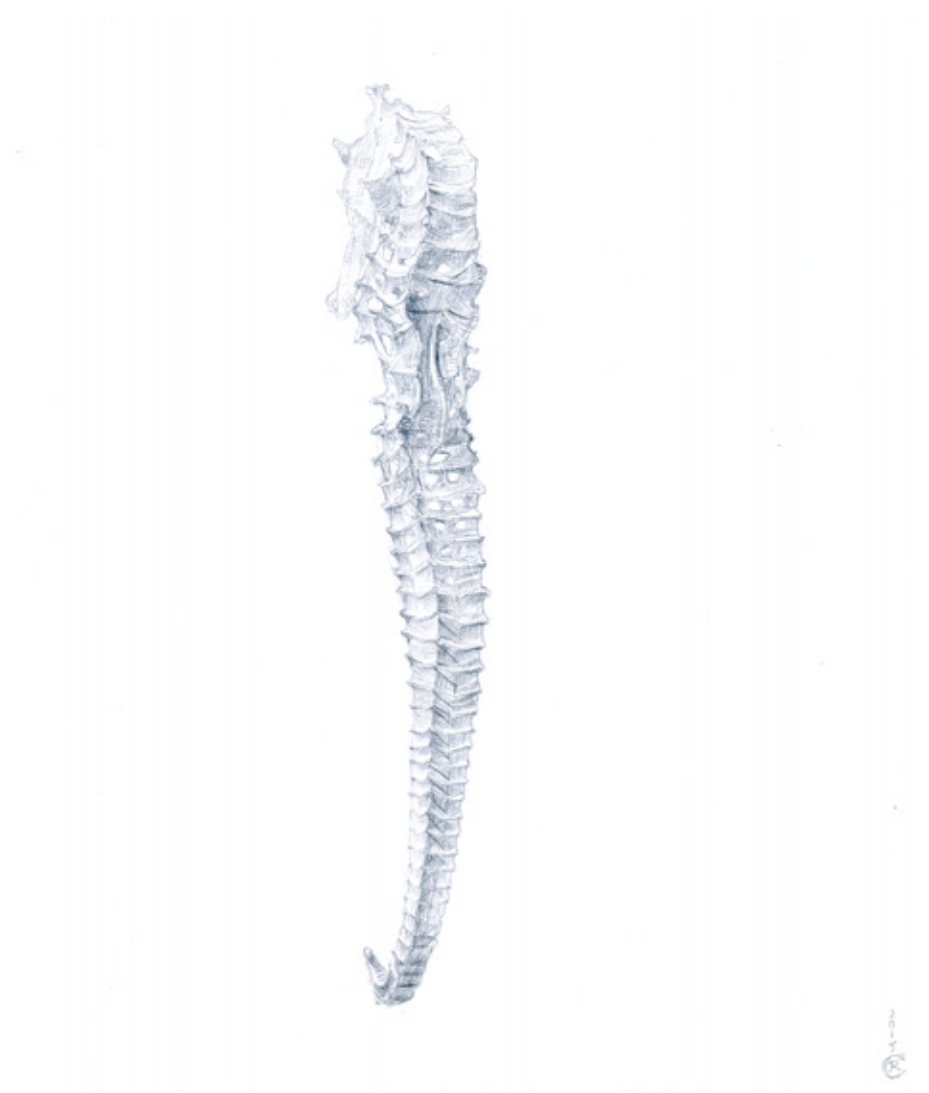
2015

\$1 000



Natural Line rotated

6" x 6", silverpoint on prepared paper
2015
\$1 500



Natural Line profile

6" x 6", silverpoint on prepared paper
2015
\$1 500



Natural Line reclining

4 1/4" x 4 1/4", silverpoint on prepared paper

2015

\$ 850

51



52

Wood shop floor

4 1/8" x 4 1/8", silverpoint on prepared paper
2015
\$850



The Alley

4 1/8" x 4 1/8", silverpoint on prepared paper

2015

\$850

55



56

Dead Bee Still Dangerous

4 1/8" x 4 1/8", silverpoint on prepared paper

2015

\$850

57



58

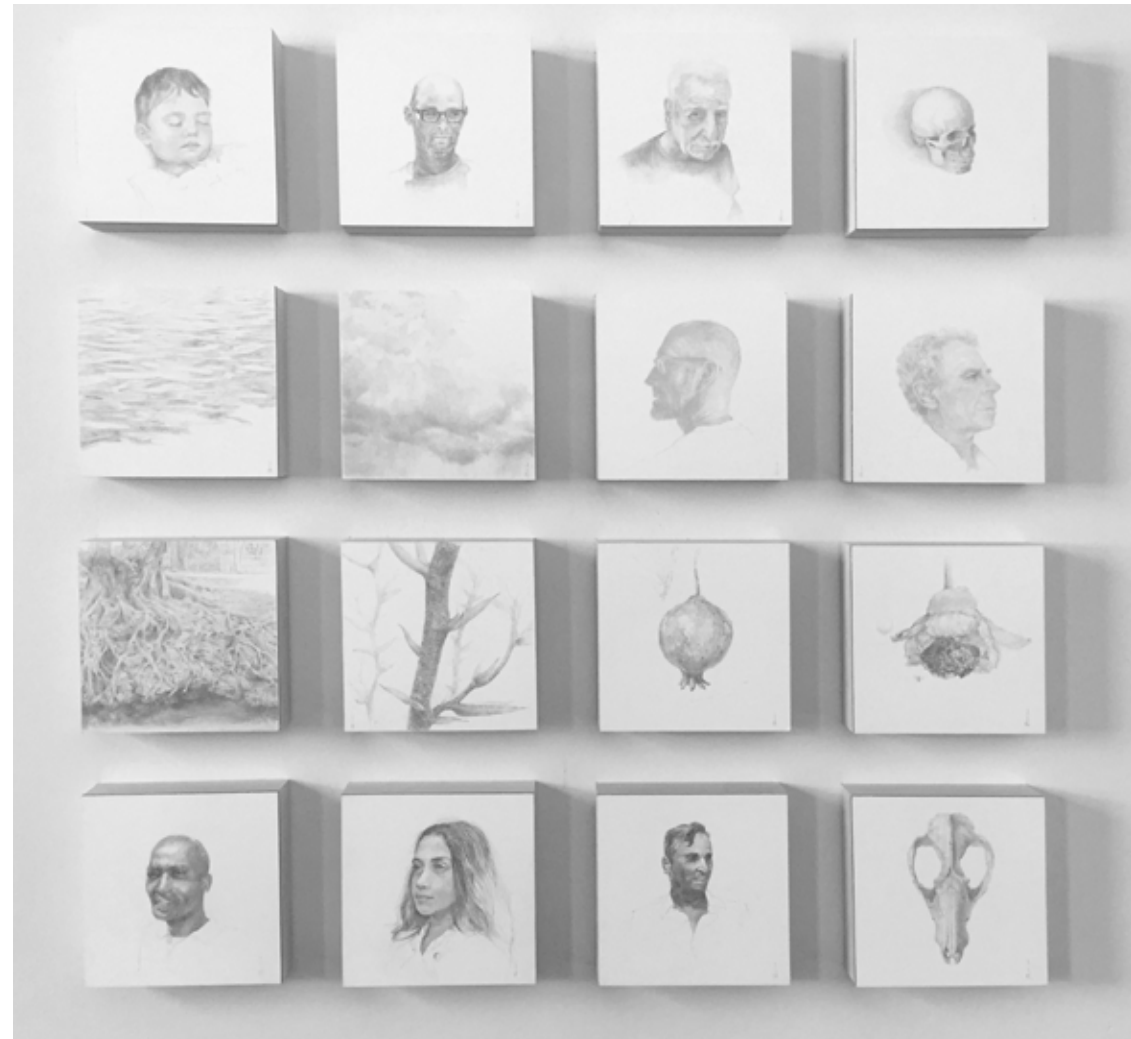
4

The silverpoints shown here depict aspects of nature as a unified whole: the four stages of man/woman, the four seasons of the year, four parts of a plant and the four times of the day. People and plants are interchangeable and given equal status. This is the central image of the show 'Natural Acts.'

Silver point is an excellent, yet unforgiving medium for depicting detail. The drawing is literally of silver, drawn from 99.95% fine 18 gauged, silver wire, deposited by dragging the wire over a prepared surface of acrylic gesso and marble dust brushed on in layers over both wood and paper. Silverpoint, a medium that pre-dates graphite (14th century), is highly reflective, natural medium. For my purposes it is meant to be reflective in form and meaning.

The images are left exposed, and will change over time like their subjects, eventually turning a soft sepia tone.

Thanks to all my models: John Daly, Stella Ceo (my niece), Rocco Provisero, Ralph Provisero, Philippe Bonnery, and academic colleagues: John Onyango, Ari Millas, and Jean Francois Lejeune.



youth

Rocco Provisero

6"x 6", silverpoint on prepared archival board

2015

\$800



adulthood

Ralph Provisero

6"x 6", silverpoint on prepared archival board

2015

\$800



maturity

Ari Millas

6"x 6", silverpoint on prepared archival board

2015

\$800



death

skull

6"x6", silverpoint on prepared archival board

2015

\$800



spring

water

6"x 6", silverpoint on prepared archival board

2015

\$800



summer

sky

6"x 6", silverpoint on prepared archival board

2015

\$800



fall

Philippe Bonnery
6"x 6", silverpoint on prepared archival board
2015
\$800



winter

Jean Francois LeJeune
6"x 6", silverpoint on prepared archival board
2015
\$800

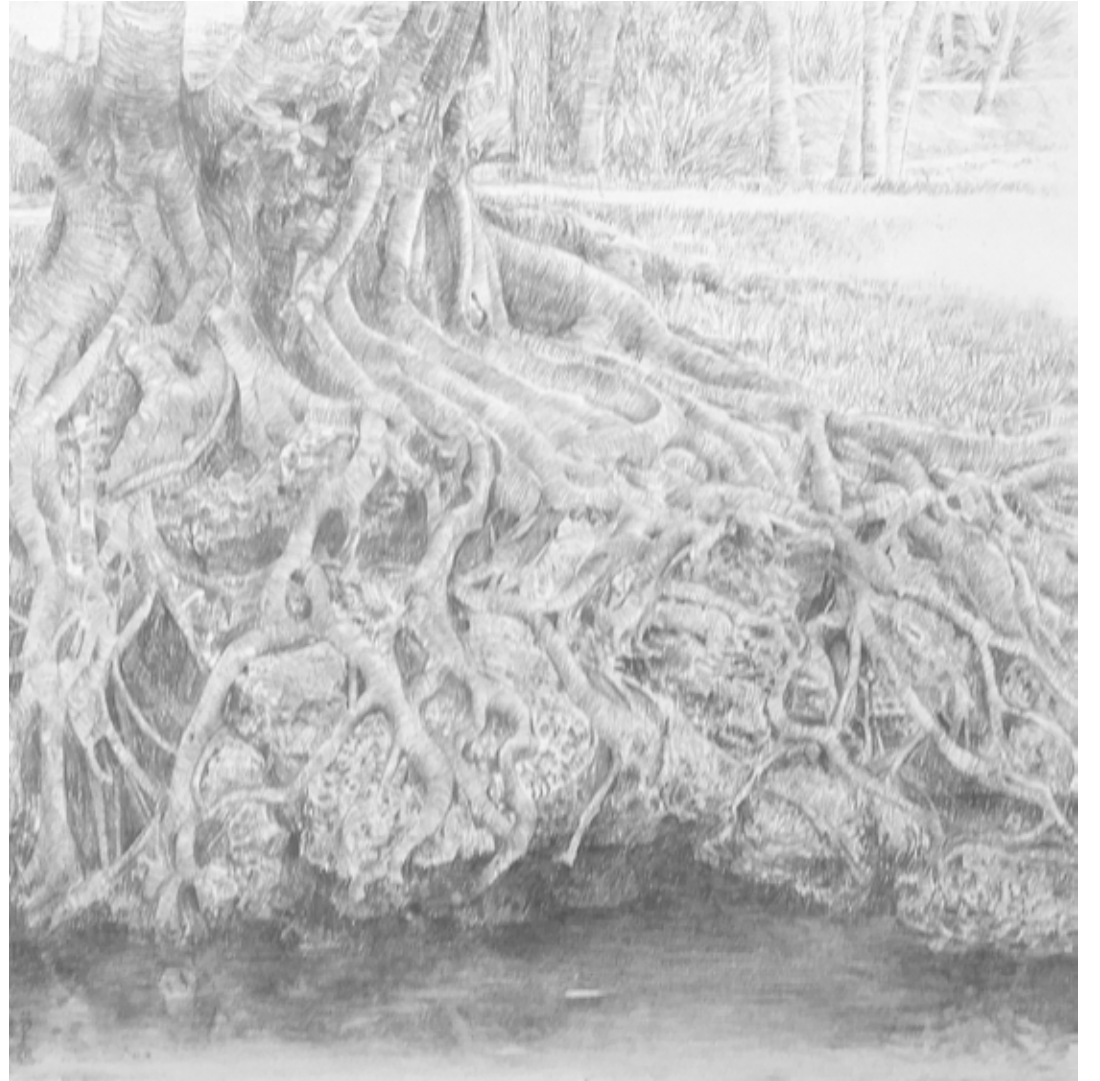


roots

6"x6" silverpoint on prepared archival board

2015

\$800



stem

6"x 6", silverpoint on prepared archival board

2015

\$800



fruit

6"x 6", silverpoint on prepared archival board

2015

\$800



flower

6"x 6", silverpoint on prepared archival board

2015

\$800



dawn

John Onyango
6"x 6", silverpoint on prepared archival board
2015
\$800



day

Stella Ceo

6"x 6", silverpoint on prepared archival board

2015

\$800



dusk

John Daly

6"x 6", silverpoint on prepared archival board

2015

\$800



night

possum skull

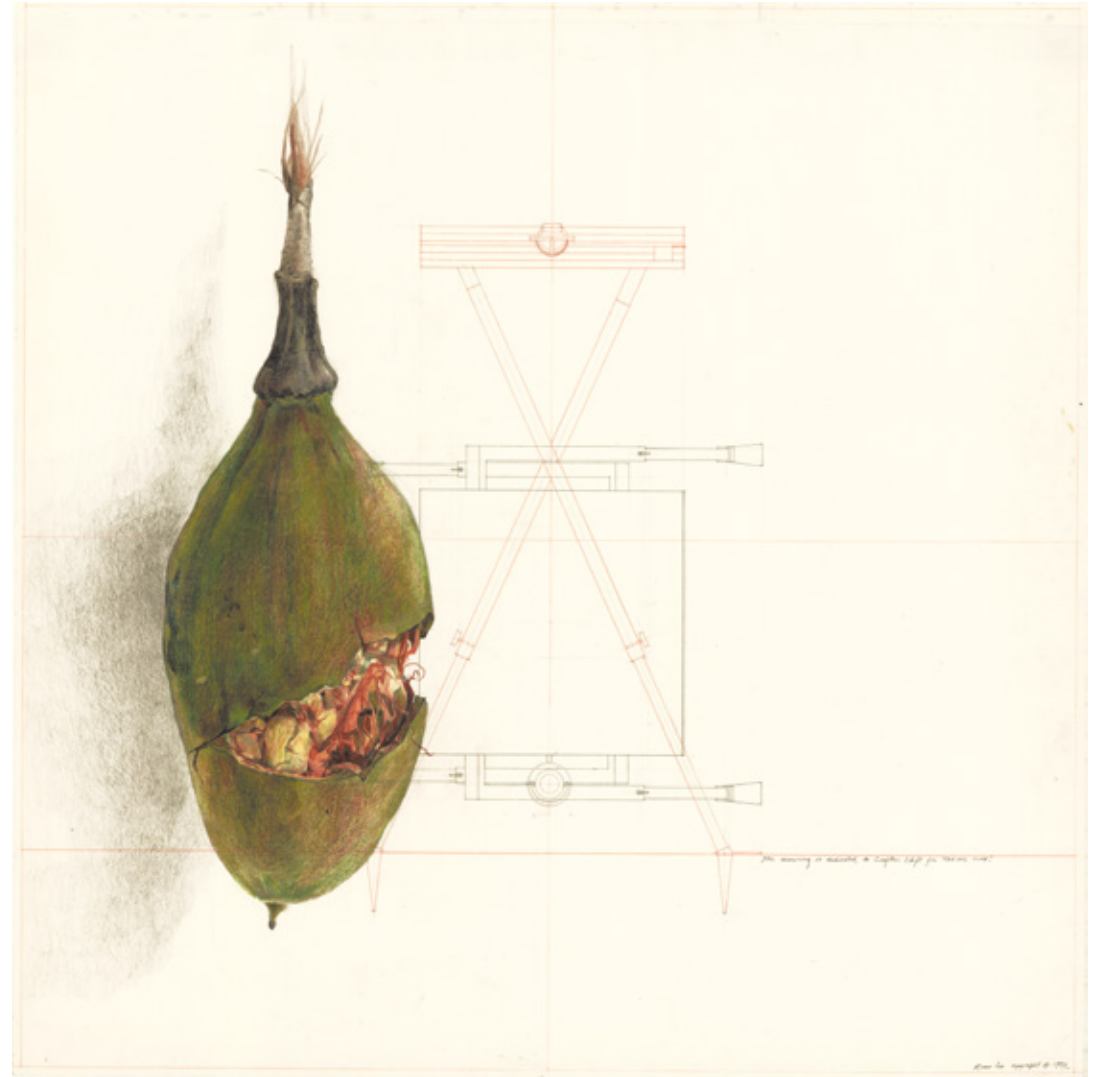
6"x 6", silverpoint on prepared archival board

2015

\$800



Naturalist table with Baobab Seed
18" x 18", colored pencil, graphite, red lead, on bond
1992
NFS



Naturalist Field Table 1992

Inspired by David Fairchild's long camera for photographing insects, the table presented here, is a piece of furniture that derives its form from its program for field use in a tropical environment. The design explores the unique problem of botanical drawing and seed collection on site, employing a number of adjustments, compartments, and accessories for working in unusual site conditions. The table adjusts both in height and can be used sitting, standing or without the legs as a laptop desk. The table can also be adjusted for different angles of working by a hinged stainless steel bar on the inside of the box and when not in use, the whole table fits into an oiled canvas backpack for easy transport.

In order that the top surface be free of instruments an ink well is provided to be attached to either the right or left hand side of the table, rotating on a gimbal to remain upright when the top angle is adjusted. Spring loaded pencil and

pen drawers are accessed from the sides, and may be left open while in use. The thin paper drawer is access from the opposite side and is sandwiched between layers of alder and maple veneer wood. The inner compartment of the table top contains a divided and removable stainless steel tray for small seed storage and a flat compartment for cuttings and leaf collection. The ground spikes for anchoring the table are removable for transportation and varying soil conditions. Finally the leg assembly detaches from the top and folds within itself to a 1" thickness and larger than the top, is strapped to the outside of the backpack to give it structure and support for transportation. When the pack is taken off, the frame elevates the backpack off the ground.

The table was featured in I.D. Annual design Review in 1993 where it won an honorable mention in an international furniture design competition.

The jurors: George Beylerian, Marco Pasanella, and Bridgitte Shim remarked: "It is a little piece of Louis Vuitton with its oiled canvas shoulder bag, hand blown glass inkwell, apple veneered table top and aluminum legs." They were also impressed by its adjustability. Over the years it has had some rough treatment but still holds together well.

Special thanks to my best friend Gregory Saldana who collaborated with me on this project.

v

Fabricators: Cecil Yother, San Francisco, CA

Wood: Ian Nies, San Francisco, CA

Glass: Elizabeth Roso, San Francisco, CA

Designer: Rocco Ceo

Fabrication Manager: Gregory Saldana, San Francisco, CA

Detail Development: Rocco Ceo, Gregory Saldana

Baobab Seed: Crafton Clift, Kampong, Coconut Grove, FL

Naturalist Table

Materials: Apple veneer plywood, aluminum, stainless steel, blown glass, oiled canvas backpack

1992

\$10 000



Rocco's Closing Lecture



Rocco Ceo

was born in Auburn, New York. His father, a professional golfer, tired of long winters and the short golf season, moved the family in 1970 to Tequesta Florida to be the founding golf professional of a new club, Turtle Creek. Growing up with his two sisters on the edge of Jonathan Dickinson State Park, Ceo took in everything the sub-tropical landscape had to offer. Encouraged by his parents, he started his formal training in painting at the age of 9, studying watercolor for eight years with the painter Richard Frizzell. While in high school he won a statewide competition at the Norton Museum of Art to further his studies in oils with the painter Normandino Simonelli. This early training and influence resulted in an application and scholarship to study painting at the Rhode Island School of Design in 1979. While at RISD, his interest in figurative art deepened while the school's painting program diverged into mostly abstract expressionism. Disenchanted with the program's encouraged path, he pursued archi-

tecture and painting, graduating with Bachelor's degrees in both fine arts and architecture. After RISD he studied at Harvard where he received his post-professional Masters degree in Architecture while also studying film and printmaking at the Carpenter Center for Visual Arts. Now a Professor of Architecture at the University of Miami he has never strayed far from painting and drawing. His architecture and fine art work has been exhibited at Harvard's Carpenter Center for Visual Studies, Rhode Island School of Design, and at numerous international venues such as the Foundation Pour L' Architecture in Brussels, Belgium, Habitat II International Forum in Istanbul, Turkey, and the Venice Biennale in Venice, Italy.

Locally he has exhibited at the Center for Contemporary Art/COCA, in North Miami and the Miami Center for Architecture and Design/MCAD.

A Professor of Architecture, Ceo teaches courses in: Design, Design/Build (with Jim Adamson), foundation courses in freehand and mechanical Drawing, drawing seminars on color theory, Michelangelo, Historic American Building Survey/HABS and Historic American Landscape Survey/HALS. He has produced drawings of the elements of Florida's landscapes as well as the documentation of seminal sites in the history of South Florida such as Vizcaya and the Marjory Stoneman Douglas home. His published work includes the award winning books, Redland: A Preservation and Tourism Plan done with Margot Ammidown and Maria Nardi and Historic Landscapes of Florida co-authored with Joanna Lombard. His architecture practice focuses on the unique relationship between architecture and landscape found in the American Tropics. His work has received awards from the Florida Trust for Historic Preservation, Progressive Architecture, and I.D. Magazine. His interest in paradox found

in the study of the natural world informs his architecture, research and painting.

meetinghouse[®]

co-founders

Veruska Vasconez,
Maira C. Holohan,
Molly McGreevy,
Jenny Brillhart Page
& Philippe Bonnery

contact

email: info@meetinghousemiami.org
Phone: +1 305 215 4232
+1 917 547 9076
www.meetinghousemiami.org

