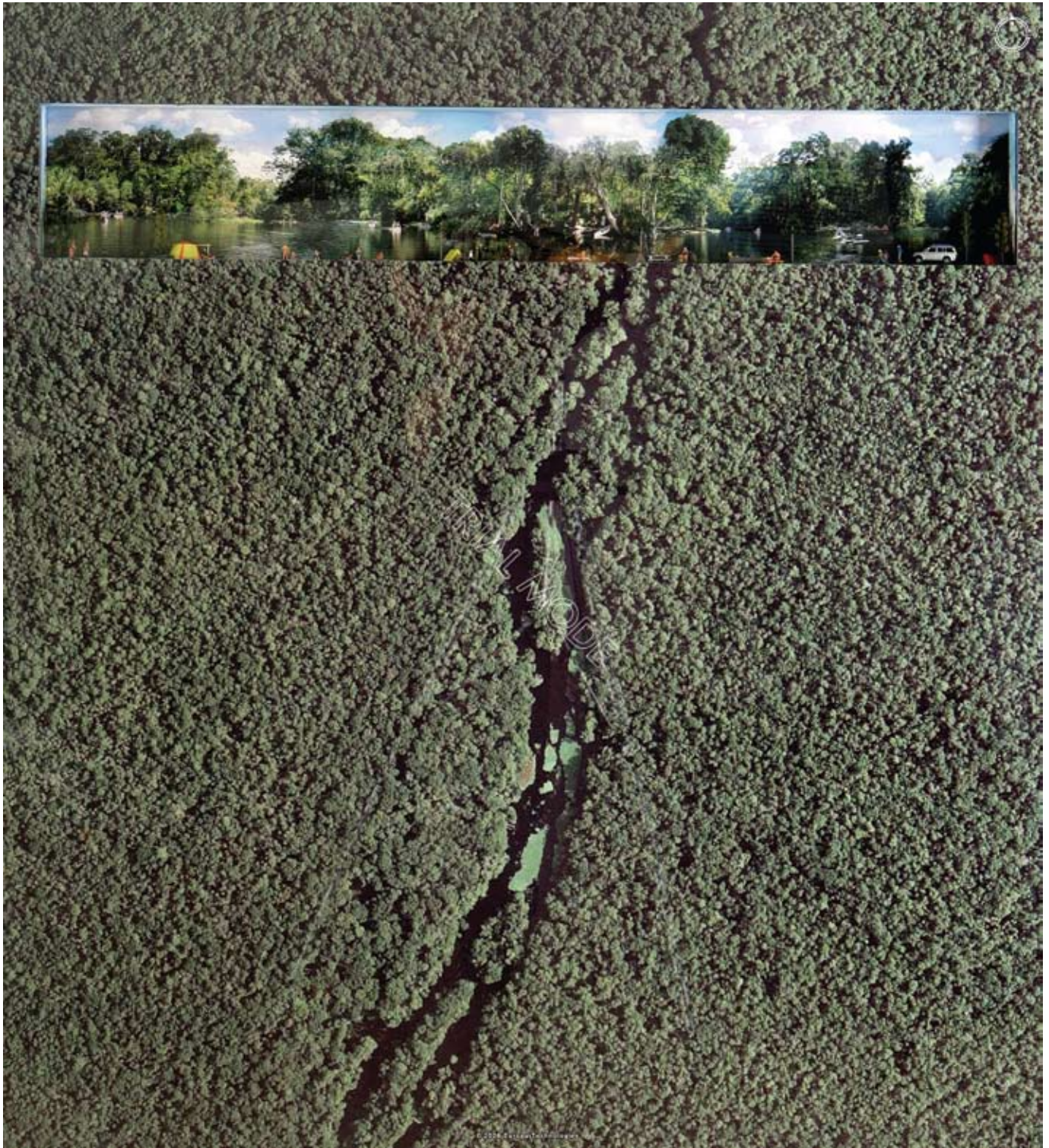


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All images are courtesy of ArtSpace/Virginia Miller Galleries, Coral Gables (Miami), Florida. **Kyle, *Wekiva River 1*, 2006**, mixed media construction, 56" x 50" x 3".

THE LANDSCAPE: THAT WINDOW TO THE HUMAN SOUL

By Janet Batet

Landscape is one of the most ancient genres in the history of art, since an interest in the environment provides a propitious and unique window for peering into the human soul. Furthermore, nowadays this subject matter stands as a metaphor for social and political inquiry, fertile ground for debating our positions on the preservation and future of our planet.

This spring, Art Space/Virginia Miller Galleries in Coral Gables is presenting "Vistas: Landscapes Interpreted." Featuring works by Wulf Barsch, Arless Day, Josephine Haden, Kyle, Richard Lytle and John Torina, this group exhibition provides a widely varied vision of landscape.

Wulf Barsch, Arless Day, Richard Lytle and John Torina are interested in environmental issues. Barsch's compositions are the perfect conjunction between landscape and geometric invention. His canvases give the impression of constellations descending to the ground. These metaphysical universes merge Earth and sky in an indissoluble communion, forcing us



Josephine Haden, *The Kiss*, 2004, oil / canvas, 60" x 84".

to lower our inquiring eyes to the ground in order to there find all the answers to our questions. Working with complicated collages, which the artist then paints, Arless Day builds up meticulous symphonies: exuberant panaceas reclaimed thanks to this process. "I try to create a place in time, just as a director in a movie creates a set," notes Day. In the cases of Lytle and Torina, it is the natural element *per se* that becomes relevant, a sort of call or alert.

Josephine Haden and Kyle are interested in ecological threats and their political implications. Haden's *Globalization* series creates a dichotomous universe where nature is invaded by civilization. Monochrome images that connote the artifice are detached from the natural surroundings. Haden's characters are iconic extracts from our urban culture, who incoherently and dramatically try to fit into a nature they do not understand.

Kyle works with the sharpness of a scalpel. In his oeuvres, he presents us with geological sections that reveal frightening realities, facts that go unnoticed in our daily life and yet are inextricably linked to us.

The Wekiva River is a paradigmatic work. The piece is the result of site-specific research. The artist points to the fact that Orlando is in the process of building a bypass. It is largely completed, but the remaining portion has been a flash point for controversy with various interests battling for and against its proposed path. Using satellite imagery from *Google Earth*, Kyle shows us the hurtful tentacle of this enormous highway system, threatening and pitiless, which extends into the Wekiva River, one of the few remaining near-pristine riverine systems in central Florida. At the top of the artwork, Kyle, recreates a mundane view of the river in which plenty of people enjoy its prodigious nature.

Kyle's artwork appropriates one of the most emblematic and frightening traits of our society: that schizophrenic characteristic where every single fact loses its depth to become mere entertainment, a glossy image dissociated from reality. This process of removing all meaning leads to self-annihilation of the human and nature.

"Vistas: Landscapes Interpreted" at Art Space/Virginia Miller Galleries is a tribute to nature and a reflection on our contemporary society.

The exhibition is on view through July 30th, 2010. ■



Arless Day, *Clouds Over China*, 2008, collage and gouache on board, 19" x 13" framed.

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