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The New Crown Jewel of Miami

Ann Binlot



TRANSPPOSITION: Over Many Miles by Paula Crown (Robin Hill)

A few years ago, artist Paula Crown — who is also a patron and entrepreneur and the wife of James Crown, the president and heir of investment firm Henry Crown and Company — boarded a helicopter and flew above the Drakensberg Mountains in South Africa, determined to record the experience equipped with nothing more than a sketchbook and felt pens. Despite the movements of the helicopter, and her son becoming airsick in the back, Crown sketched out something that would be a major influence on her work.

“I had these drawings, which had some really interesting features, and I tore them out of the notebook, and I wanted to explore them,” says Crown.

Crown scanned the drawings, which eventually evolved into a series of fractal drawings and paintings. This month, Crown debuted her latest piece to come from that trip, *TRANSPPOSITION: Over Many Miles*. Located on a 3,240 square foot corner of land on NE 1st Avenue and NE 39th Street in Miami’s Design District. Crown magnified one of her drawings 28,000 times, zoning in on a 1-inch portion.

“This basically is the essence, the triangular geometry that you get down to, when you dig really deep,” says Crown. “These are the geometric marks between the felt pen that has absorbed on the paper, so I was really intrigued with the motions that that created, and in effect, the landscape within a line of the landscape was discovered.”

To realize the piece, she called on architect Jeanne Gang — whose residential building, Sweetbird South Residences will begin construction on that same space once it goes down next spring — to help plan the piece, and artist Theaster Gates, who often works with reclaimed wood and has a Design Apprenticeship Program in Chicago. “I like to think about him giving dignity to a lot of wood that has been abandoned, and he reuses it and it finds new life,” she says. The outdoor sculpture, which is meant to be used as a public plaza, recreates the triangular patterns in her drawing through 1,000-year-old salvaged wood, artificial turf, sand and tempered glass. The lone bench emulates the part of a page that was ripped out from Crown’s notebook.

After its stint in Miami, *TRANSPOSITION: Over Many Miles*, will head back to Crown’s hometown of Chicago, where she says it will find its permanent home.

“I hope it’s something that the Design District people who live and work here will use and engage with in our analog and digital world, sometimes we live too much in the virtual, and it was very much important to me that this was something that one could relate to — the tactility of both materiality, and just the presence with materials and the objects themselves,” says Crown.

TRANSPOSITION: Over Many Miles is on view in Miami’s Design District at NE 1st Avenue and NE 39th Street through March 2015.



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