

Christo and Jeanne-Claude

Surrounded Islands (Biscayne Bay, Greater Miami, Florida, 1980–1983)

photography by Wolfgang Volz, offset print

1983

99 x 63.5 cm

Collection of Galeria Labirynt

The artistic duo Christo and Jeanne-Claude created one of their most spectacular projects in Miami. Eleven man-made islands in the Bay of Biscayne were surrounded for two weeks with a pink polypropylene fabric covering an area of more than 600 square metres. Fixed with anchors and metal rods, the material accurately reflected the shape of the surrounding islands. By changing the real face of the natural environment, the artistic duo created a delicate symbiotic relationship between art, city and nature, while contributing to the protection of a degraded natural environment.

“Surrounded Islands” is a work that highlights the different elements and ways of life for Miami residents – between land and water, natural and man-transformed environment. The city’s characteristic intense pink flamingos, crimson sunsets, art deco hotels with ruby accents and neon lights transform into bright pink fabric surrounding the islands. The shiny fabric harmonises with the tropical vegetation of desert green islands, the blue skies over Miami and the colours of the shallow waters of Biscayne Bay.

The man-made islands in Miami’s Biscayne Bay were mainly used for landfilling. Grown with dense vegetation, they hid 40 tons of rubbish – rubble, old refrigerators, tires, sinks, used mattresses and abandoned boats. Christo and Jeanne-Claude spent three years analysing the factors affecting this environment, getting to know the protected nature of the bay, commissioned studies of local fauna, determined the technical feasibility of attaching the material to the islands and experimented with floating fabrics.

The photo by Wolfgang Volz in the collection of Galeria Labirynt shows three islands that are part of the work “Surrounded Islands”.

description: Krystian Kamiński

translation: Krystian Kamiński

tactile diagram: Agata Kattenbach

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