

## Creating “River of Grass”

**Helen M. Salzberg Inaugural Artist in Residence, Dorothy Simpson Krause  
Jaffe Center for Book Arts, Wimberly Library, Florida Atlantic University**

*There are no other Everglades in the world. They are, they have always been, one of the unique regions of the earth, remote, never wholly known.*

Marjory Stoneman Douglas  
*The Everglades: river of grass, 1947*

My proposal for this prestigious residency was to produce an homage to Marjory Stoneman Douglas and her seminal book, “The Everglades: River of Grass”.

When I started in January, Arthur Jaffe, John Cutrone and Seth Thompson helped me explore the resources of the Jaffe Center and I began to make decisions on how I might best use the available supplies and equipment to make my proposal a reality.

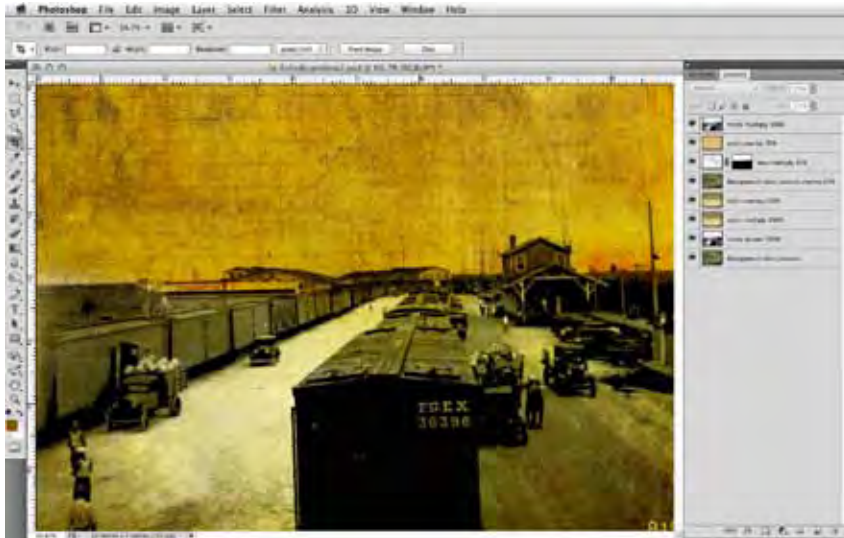
Very soon into the process, Rita Pellen recommended sites from which I could download historic photographs, documents and maps. As I narrowed my choices, she helped me obtain permission to use images from the University of Florida’s “America’s Swamp: the Historical Everglades Project” and “Reclaiming the Everglades”, a compilation of collections from the University of Miami, Florida International University and History Miami.

My research into the history and ecology of this complex ecosystem was summarized in an introductory page which concluded with a quote from Michael Grunwald’s 2006 book, *The Swamp*. He says restoring the Everglades “is a moral test. It will be a test of our willingness to restrain ourselves, to share the earth’s resources with the other living things that moveth upon it, to live in harmony with nature. If we pass, we may deserve to keep the planet.”

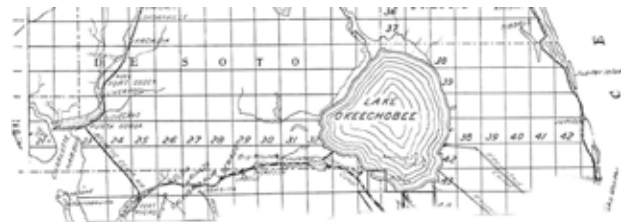
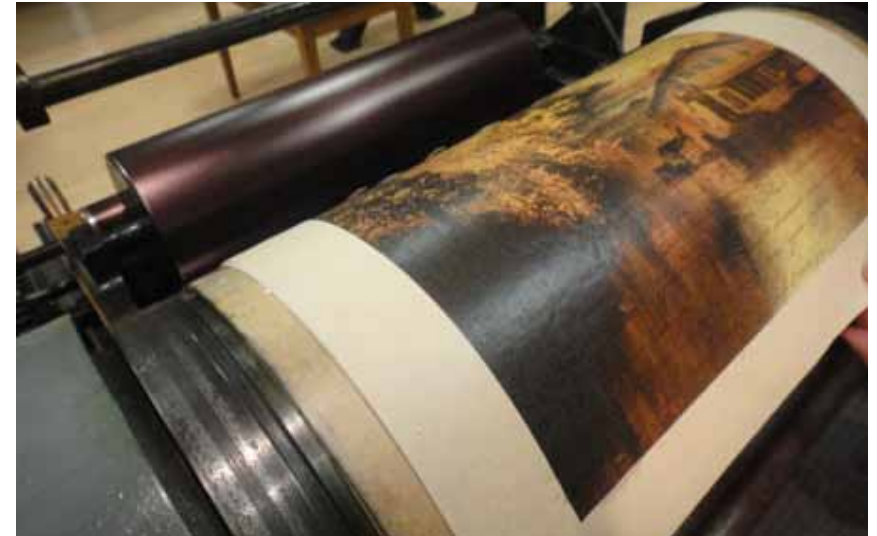


Because I wanted to use the Center's letterpress studio in the visual component of the project, John helped me understand the process of working with polymer plates. On the computer, I combined my photographs of the Everglades with the historic images and, in each, separated a layer that became the letterpress printing plate.

In a collection of papers that had been donated to the Center, I found vintage packages of heavy and sheer Yo Kou paper, handmade in China. Although I had never considered a laser printer for making art, as I proofed the pieces on the Center's laser printer, I discovered that the toner created a lovely sheen and decided to use the laser to print the under-layer for the letterpress.



Combined images in Photoshop



File for letterpress plate to be printed in red gold metallic ink.

The unprinted margins of the paper were torn away to create a deckle edge. In the final set there is a title page, introduction, 6 laser printed images with letterpress overprints, a page listing the organizations that granted permission to use their resources and a colophon.

Each 7" x 10" page was folded into a folio then opened flat and a sheet of Yo Kou sheer was used between each folio as interleaving. John, Seth and student assistants Jonas McCaffery, Brooke Belcher and Cree Townsend helped with the printing, tearing, folding and collating.



To house the folios I chose a saddle brown handmade paper folded into an envelope shape. From a collection of native materials found outside the Wimberly Library, Arthur selected a seedpod from a mahogany tree as an appropriate choice for a closure. Seth experimented with various ways of attaching the pod and adding a tie with fibers from another gift to the Jaffe. Their contributions were critical to completing this collaborative project.

The 7" x 10" envelope references a packet of documents an early settler might have carried. Containing 10 folios, it is a limited edition of 36, published by Minerva: The Press at Wimberly.



*For this opportunity I am especially indebted to Florida Atlantic University, The Wimberly Library, and Arthur Jaffe, whose ever growing collection forms the basis of the Jaffe Center. His daily presence was one of the true delights of my residency. Through her endowment, Helen M. Salzberg made the Artist in Residence program possible. She is as gracious as she is generous and I am privileged to be the first AIR. John Cutrone, Director of the Jaffe Center, juggled multiple tasks simultaneously while making it seem not only easy but great fun for all concerned. Rita Pellen, Associate Dean of Libraries, made my life infinitely easier with her expertise and assistance. Seth Thompson solved problems and provided technical help with computers, printers and paper fasteners. And last but not least, Jonas McCaffery was always there to help when needed, especially with a great cup of coffee.*