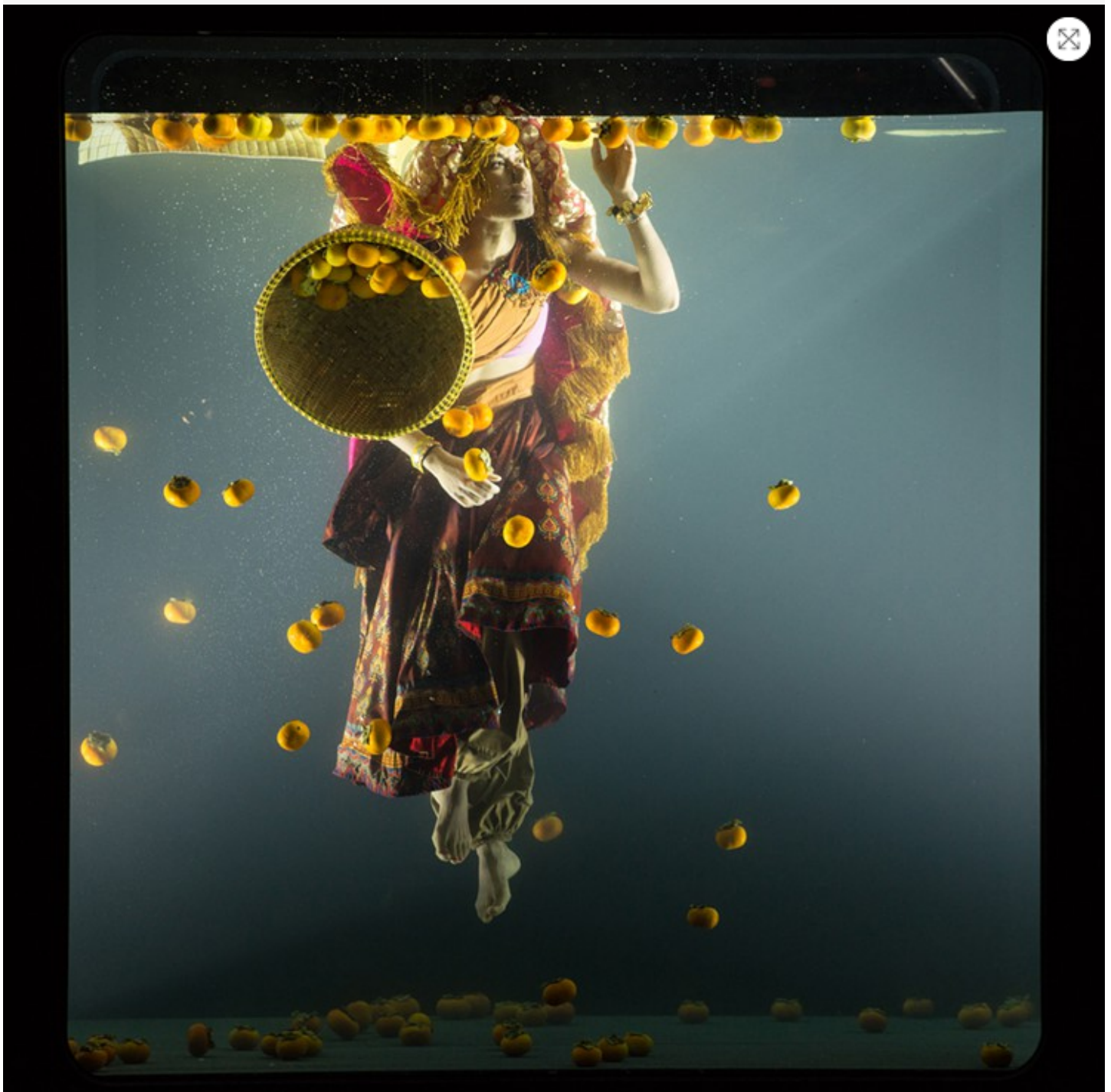# MIAMI New Times®

MDC LIVE ARTS' "HOLOSCENES" EXPLORES LIFE UNDERWATER

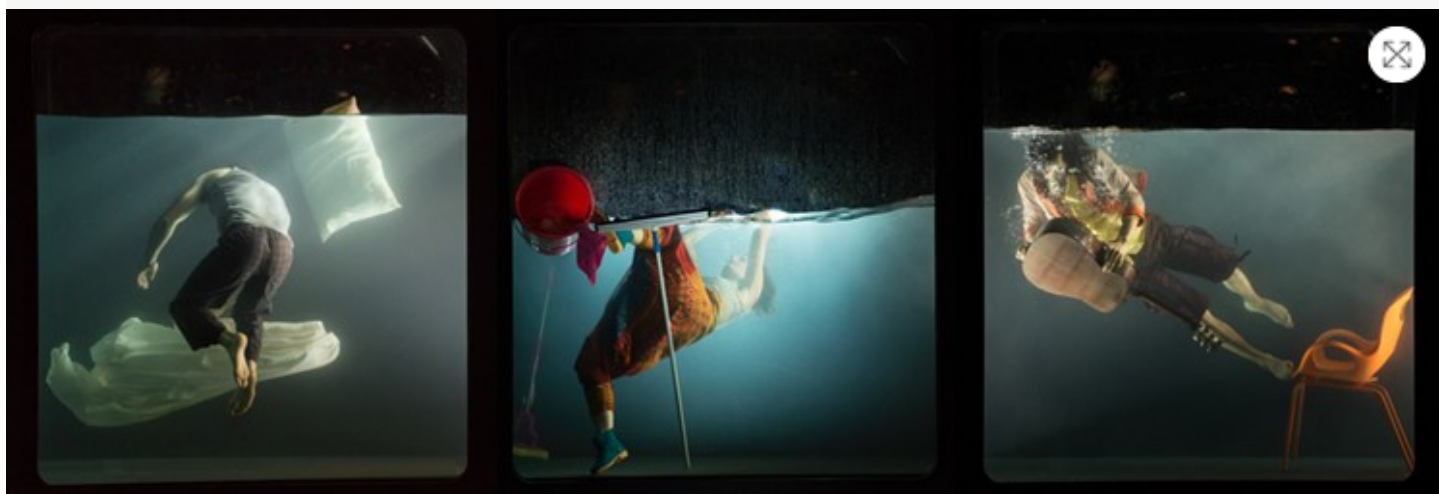BY **ARTBURST MIAMI**   MONDAY, NOVEMBER 30, 2015 | 23 HOURS AGO

Lars Jan, Courtesy of Artburst Miami

Considering climate experts predict that significant swaths of South Florida will be underwater within the next 100 years, MDC Live Arts' presentation of "Holoscenes" seems particularly prescient. Taking place on the Miami Dade College Wolfson Campus' Kyriakides Plaza over the course of Miami Art Week, the exhibition is a performance installation that explores life underwater.

Spanning six hours, "Holoscenes" features performers floating and sinking in an elevator-size aquarium that's continually filled with and drained of 3,600 gallons of water through a specially created hydraulic system. Each performer presents a daily activity — making a bed, selling fruit, playing a guitar — and they continue their task despite the ebb and flow of the water that at times overtakes them. It is a performance artwork that was inspired by the realities of climate change.

For creator Lars Jan, the inspiration for the work came from an image of flooding in Pakistan in 2010, which created an indelible impression on him. "I think the most important moment was just the visual idea that popped into my head, and it was this glass room with a person who is minding his/her business reading a newspaper."

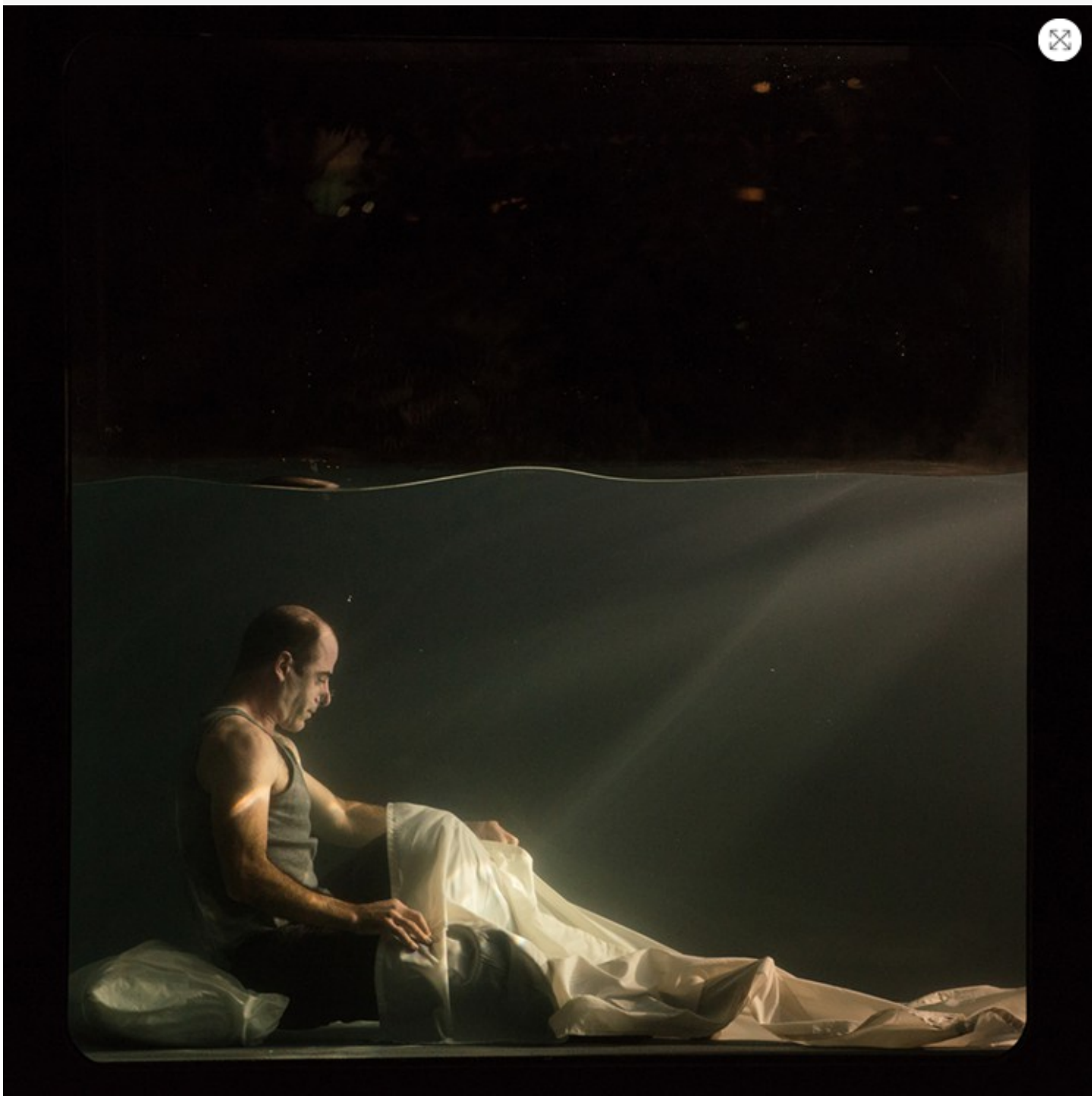*Lars Jan, Courtesy of Artburst Miami*

While developing the project, water became a character in and of itself. "We realized the water is this amazing puppeteer," says Jan, who splits his time between Los Angeles and New York, two cities also facing threats from climate change.

"You can't really work against the force of it because of the speed of it and the volume of it — you must adapt and adjust to it — and that's the essence of the piece, in terms of how it resonates with climate change.

"That's one of the threads, the extent to which we adapt and what it looks like. And what it looks like in the aquarium is a bit fanciful in performance. But I think it does examine how we are adaptable creatures and how adaptation is a double-edged sword. Adaptation allows us to look the other way because we are confident in our ability to change our behavior."

As an artistic installation, "Holoscenes" invites audiences to view and reflect on the impact of water on their daily lives. "It's not about virtuosic acrobatic water performance," Jan explains. "It is the opposite of that; the starting point is going to be every day and the

explains. "It is the opposite of that, the starting point is going to be every day and the mundane. I really wanted to collide the human body with this material."

Lars Jan, Courtesy of Artburst Miami

It's a collision that MDC Live Arts executive director Kathryn Garcia hopes will generate conversation in the community. "I think that any time you can bring something to the forefront through art, it touches people in a different way than a statistic will. It gets to a real emotional core of what it means to deal with flooding and water, and that's what this piece does – it really touches you on terms of 'How are we going to evolve to deal with this?' It's just another way to talk about it, and hopefully it makes an impact."

Although the piece strongly resonates with water and climate change, Jan thinks "there are a lot of ways to see the piece, so I'm always interested in that... What I really like is, because it's

lot of ways to see the piece, so I'm always interested in that... What I really like is, because it's in a public place, I really like when you have kids saying, 'Oh, it's a mermaid story' or 'It's about dreaming,' or to talk about how it's about death and rebirth. It brings up a lot of other things too, and I love hearing those conversations in a public space."

– Rebekah Lanae Lengel, artburstmiami.com

"Holoscenes"
10 a.m. to 4 p.m. Wednesday, December 2, and 2 to 8 p.m. Thursday, December 3, through Saturday, December 5, at Miami Dade College Wolfson Campus Kyriakides Plaza, 300 NE Second Ave., Miami. Admission is free. Call 305-237-3010 or visit mdclivearts.org.

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