

CRANDON PARK

# VILLAGE OF KEY BISCAYNE PUBLIC ART

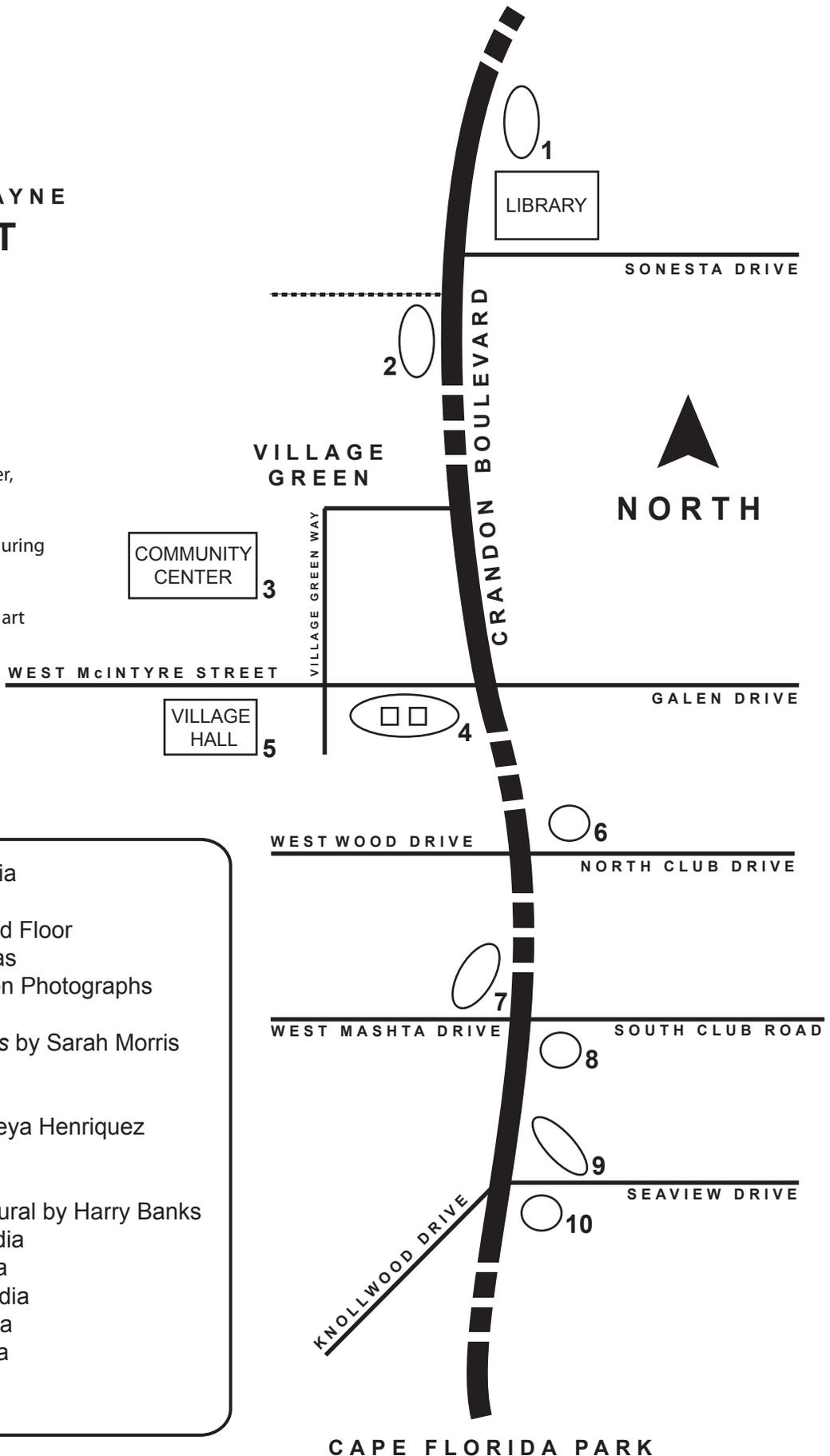
## SELF-GUIDED TOURS

All site-specific works are located along Crandon Boulevard and are accessible 24/7. Street parking is available.

For works displayed in the Community Center, call 305-365-8900 for hours.

Art works in Village Hall are accessible only during business hours.

For more information on the program or the art visit [www.artinkeybiscayne.org](http://www.artinkeybiscayne.org).



- 1 *Dragonfly Plaza* by Jose Bedia
  - 2 *Pelican Plaza* by Jose Bedia
  - 3 **Community Center** – Second Floor  
Drawings of Bedia Plazas  
Mashta Album, Matheson Photographs
  - 4 **Civic Center Oval**  
*Monaco Reflecting Pools* by Sarah Morris
  - 5 **Village Hall**  
Suite 250  
Photographs by Quisqueya Henriquez  
and Cecilia Arboleda  
Room 130  
Key Biscayne History Mural by Harry Banks
  - 6 *Barracuda Plaza* by Jose Bedia
  - 7 *Manatee Plaza* by Jose Bedia
  - 8 *Manta Ray Plaza* by Jose Bedia
  - 9 *Mariposa Plaza* by Jose Bedia
  - 10 *Anhinga Plaza* by Jose Bedia
- SCHEMATIC MAP - NOT TO SCALE**

## Key Biscayne Tour Guide

By Helen L. Kohen

Take this art tour on a bicycle, ride, park and walk, or, if hearty, walk it all the way. In all cases Key Biscayne's public art is totally accessible, an adventure that combines fine art with exposure to the natural history of the island and its built environment.

1. The pond at the Key Biscayne Library is the starting point. There, at the north end of the main spine of the Key, in the area that links Miami-Dade County's Crandon Park to the State's Cape Florida Park and its landmark lighthouse, the first work encountered represents the most recent sidewalk terrazzo installation by the internationally renowned Miami-based Cuban American artist Jose Bedia. Like the rest of his series arrayed along both sides of Crandon Blvd (7 in all), *Dragonfly Plaza* celebrates a creature indigenous to the Key's ecology.

2. At the north end of the Village Green is *Pelican Plaza*, the second of the series, all of which depict in Jose Bedia's signature figural style the birds, insects, crawlers or fish that count as species native to the Key. Since language is very significant to the artist, every one of these fanciful portraits includes the name of its subject in two languages.

3. Taking leave of the outdoors, visitors should next go to the second floor of the Community Center to see the original works on paper artist Jose Bedia prepared before the terrazzo works were begun. Colorful and elegantly rendered, they help us understand and appreciate how the artist's mind conceived of the commission, and the steps taken between these preliminary drawings and the working plans that guided the finished plazas.

Going from the Now to the Then, do not miss seeing the *Mashta Album*, a series of ca. 1918 photographs taken of a house built by Key Biscayne pioneer William John Matheson (1856-1930). Not a dwelling but a house for entertainments, Mashta House (it means "resting house" in Arabic) was used for family fun from 1920 into the late 1930's, after which it slowly decayed. As seen in these pictures it all seems exotic, not your typical millionaire's fake European palace but some combination of structure and decor that produced an unique, highly personal style.

4. Sit now on one of the benches that form part of British artist Sarah Morris's contribution to the Key's artworks, a pair of intriguing shallow water elements that create the main ambiance of the Civic Center Oval. Titled *Monaco Reflecting Pools*, the tiled pools, each configured in a different color way, appear to be immersed abstract paintings, constantly altered by changes in the light and wind that play upon their surfaces. All but mesmerizing by day, at night the geometric pool patterns are especially dazzling when lit by steady streams of artificial light. Best known as a painter and filmmaker, Sarah Morris surely put both disciplines to work when designing this piece.

5. On your way to Suite 250 in Village Hall take time to see the pool in the atrium, with its parallel lines of turtles (another indigenous Key species) spewing water. The artworks inside include a sequence of 8 color photographs by Quisqueya Henriquez in a 1988 series exploring the architecture of power. Deeply blue and mysteriously abstract, the images remark on a lighthouse built in Santo Domingo for the 500<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the first voyage of Christopher Columbus. Also in this area are 4 black and white photographs by Cecilia Arboleda that directly refer to contemporary Key Biscayne, its causeway bridges, the activities it provides, and the Brickell skyline as seen from its beaches.

6. Moving on to the east side of Crandon Boulevard, *Barracuda Plaza* is the first encountered in a line of 5 more Jose Bedia plazas. Once again the text - the name - of the fish that is often used to refer to any toxic creature, here becomes part of the artist's composition, worked as part of his overall design. Interestingly enough, the name barracuda stands correct in both English and Spanish.

7. *Manatee Plaza*, on the west side of the Boulevard, features a rotund rendition of Florida's most threatened aquatic mammal set into a bright yellow background - clearly not any color suggesting the sea. Like Jose Bedia's autograph convention of mixing text with images in most all of his artworks - paintings, drawings, prints - here he takes the artistic license due him. The Spanish name for this tropical creature is "manatí" from which the English word is derived.

8. *Manta Ray Plaza*, with its stunning polka dot design, is again on the east side of the boulevard. The largest of the rays and shaped like the Spanish cloak that gives it its name, this sea creature is also known as the devilfish. Jose Bedia depicts it as huge, its broad back taking up most of the plaza. Like all the public works in this series, the suggestion of monumentality is always underfoot (or under wheels). This is art that is not in your way, but rather along your route. Land art, with a story.

9. The *Mariposa Plaza* is especially fitting for its location, for Cape Florida State Park, just south of it contains a butterfly preserve. Of course there are many sorts of butterflies in the barrier island, many kinds in South Florida, all of them enriching the ecosystem. The Spanish name for butterfly is so popular that it has become a part of the English language. Jose Bedia is a master of creating art that acts as a vehicle to pass on information. Here the lesson is that many English words are borrowed from elsewhere.

10. Southernmost on the east side of Crandon Boulevard is the gracefully rendered *Anhinga Plaza*. A fish-eating bird that retains the Latin name of its *genus*, it is notable for its long neck and pointed bill. Our Florida version is related to species in India, Australia and Africa. The plaza featuring the anhinga in the Jose Bedia series is blue and white, and memorable as an artful reminder that all fauna is at risk in our midst, that the creatures that are or ever were native to Key Biscayne remain so only if we keep watch over the environment that sustains them.