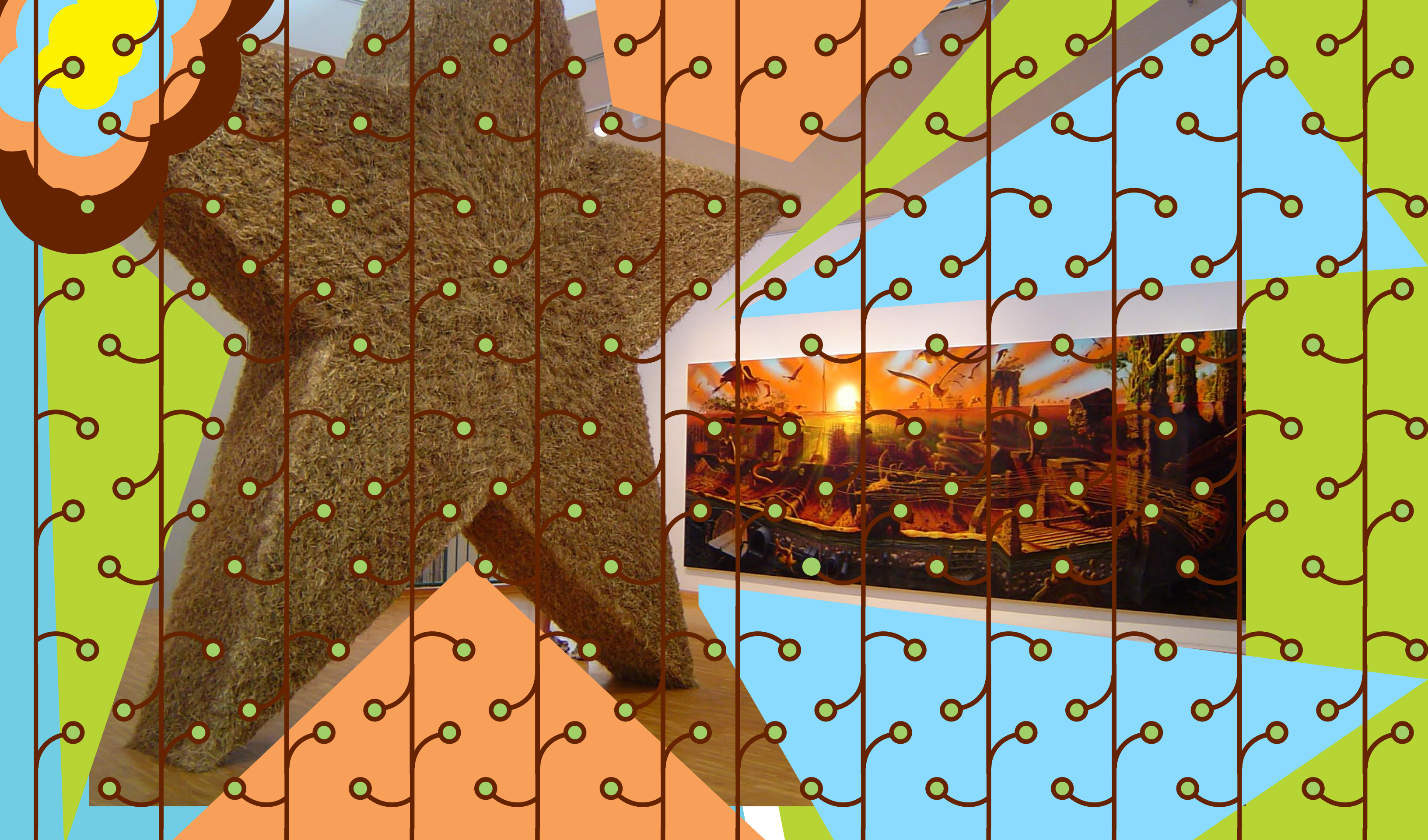




BATES COLLEGE
Museum of Art



Green Horizons





Agnes Denes
Alexis Rockman
Chris Jordan
Michael Shaughnessy
David Maisel
Virginia Valdes
Anne-Katrin Spiess
Mark Silber
Karen Adrienne
Beth O'Halloran
Christina Bechstein
Julie Patton
Seitu Jones
Bruce "Sunpie" Barnes
Carol Dilley
Bill Matthews

Green Horizons

**BATES COLLEGE
Museum of Art**

A SYNERGY EXHIBITION

Edited by Anthony Shostak

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DIRECTOR'S FOREWORD

BATES COLLEGE MUSEUM OF ART AND THE NEW ACADEMIC MUSEUM

Green Horizons illustrates the great curatorial accomplishments of academic museums in the United States. This is much more than an exhibition. It is a cultural production that brings together the full learning, teaching, and creative potential of a liberal arts college from scholarship to community building, and curriculum development. Rather than politicize the environment we have created a site for conversations, engagement, and a tribute to its myriad of creative wonders as seen through the lenses of art and creative partnerships.

Michael Shaughnessy's giant hay *New State Rising* creates an iconic stage for the exhibition. A set that revels in the wisdom of Agnes Denes, an innovator of conceptual and environmental art; heeds the rampant consumption illuminated

in Virginia Valdes's and Chris Jordan's works; faces the beleaguered future of Alexis Rockman; and investigates the sustainability of community through the work of Beth O'Halloran, Christina Bechstein and David Scobey, Julie Patton and Jonathan Skinner, as well as Seitu Jones and Kimberly Ruffin. From gardens, installation, photography, digital prints, painting and sound, to innovative dance performances by PearsonWidrig and Carol Dilley with Bill Matthews, as well as Anne-Katrin Spiess carbon adventure, the exhibition is a stage to discuss the most important topic of the 21st century stewardship of the earth.

The Bates College Museum of Art is a laboratory for the visual arts. Providing an environment for broad audiences to explore and discover synergies created by visual art across academic disciplines of a liberal arts

education, we represent the new academic museum for the 21st century. The museum works collaboratively with artists, students, faculty and other museums to create exhibitions, which offer new scholarly explorations and educational programming linked closely to our communities. Through original exhibitions, programming and a growing collection the museum transcends its commitment to expanding traditional notions of art history and identifying specific artists and artistic trends that address local and global issues in context.

Academic museums have become a powerful force in American culture. Devoted, like their college and university affiliates, to the missions of education and scholarship, these museums make daring and provocative forays into new artistic territory, presenting the work of artists from a striking variety of backgrounds and

perspectives. The Museum of Art is taking a leadership role in redefining the academic art museum for the 21st century. Dedicated to challenging explorations into visual culture and contemporary art through exhibitions and educational programs the museum represents a new cultural space where diversity is championed and the local is as significant as the global.

In the past three years the museum has concentrated on collection management infrastructure and delivery through the development of a the Synergy Project Room, museum library, improved storage for works of art, and an office space dedicated to collection management and upgraded technology. We have also launched our *Collection Project* book and exhibition series, *Students in the Vault* exhibition series where students curate collection exhibitions and have utilized the

Bates College Collaborative Technology Development Grant to create three websites for three collection exhibitions.

The long-range goal is to make our collection pertinent through exhibitions, new scholarship, publications, and on-line accessibility. To fully activate our collection through greater accessibility we are now building on our developments by placing the collection on-line. With this initiative our community can fully access the collection for research, training and integration of the visual arts in the curriculum. We will be delivering to our constituents the full potential of the institution as a teaching museum and continue our cultural leadership as a *New Academic Museum* as very few of our peer college museums are as prepared as we are to make our collections available on-line for research and scholarship.

Today many college museums are cultural leaders in a museum world defending itself against an environment increasingly dominated by commercialism. Unlike traditional academic museums that became insular by looking to the past for answers about the past, the Bates College Museum of Art views itself as a *new* academic museum and cultural leader resisting commercialization. We are dedicated to introducing new ideas and questions about how art transcends and reflects history in our current times, and presents the possibilities of what is to come. It is a laboratory for creative thought, a site of synergy where artists, curators, scholars, students and visitors engage art together.

In support of our new mission and its challenge to traditional museum methodology we received a generous gift of two million dollars to the museum:

a “synergy” fund dedicated to “the development of education, with focus on the synchronistic parallels in time and space across the subject matter of the liberal arts.” The Synergy Fund supports the museum’s efforts to look creatively at how it organizes exhibitions and how it experiences and communicates that process. While the museum does this on a modest scale with each exhibition, the Fund now allows the museum to mount Synergy Exhibitions: ambitious projects that have strong links across the curriculum to the research, teaching, and learning of the College. Green Horizons is a space of adventure, exploration and mystery where more questions are asked than answered, where process is as important as the results. A place where symposiums take place before the exhibitions, new work is commissioned, course work is integrated into process, collard greens are planted in

front of the museum, an innovative catalog is designed by Virginia Valdes, and Agnes Denes is invited to give the Otis lecture.

Green Horizons, a very ambitious interdisciplinary off the grid project will inspire artistic, environmental, economic, and social conversations surrounding an urgent 21st century topic: “What is green and what is sustainable?” Changing with every visit to the Museum or one of its site-specific works, Green Horizons is an organic exhibition and educational outreach program designed to examine the politics and nature of greenness and sustainability.

This synergy exhibition brings together internationally renowned artists Agnes Denes, Chris Jordan, David Maisel, Beth O’Halloran, Alexis Rockman, Anne-Katrin Spiess, Virginia Valdes and Maine

artists Karen Adrienne, Mark Silber, Michael Shaughnessy, and the Beehive Design Collective. It also includes new work by artists in collaboration with Bates faculty, staff, students and community organizations: Christina Bechstein with David Scobey of the Harvard Center for Community Scholarship; Seitu Kenneth Jones and Bruce Barnes with English professor Kimberly N. Ruffin; Julie Patton with environmental studies professor and eco-poet Jonathan Skinner; Pearson Widrig Dance Theater and composer Robert Eén with Bates Dance Festival Director Laura Faure; dance professor Carol Dilley and music professor Bill Matthews. Museum L/A, Stanton Bird Club, and Kristen Walter '00 of Lots-to-Gardens are also involved in these projects, breaking the mold and paradigm of traditionally conceived museum exhibitions.

Perhaps nowhere in the United States is the environment more central to a region's way of life than it is here in Maine. Maine plays a unique role in the densely populated Northeast region of the country, and environmental issues are of particular importance. Maine has nine million acres of unorganized territories, and more than 85 percent of the state is forested. Maine features mountainous terrain, one of the longest coastlines in the continental United States, and an abundance of lakes. As part of the larger community of Maine, Bates has a commitment to sound environmental practices as well. For years, the College has been cited for its successful recycling program. Bates is the largest purchaser of green power both within the New England Small College Athletic Conference and among all small, private liberal arts colleges in the EPA's Green Power Partnership, a voluntary program helping to increase the

use of green power. The College's Program in Environmental Studies is one of the oldest and largest in the region. It stands as a model that has successfully integrated the many disciplines that define study of the environment and is equally strong in science, public policy, and the arts.

We would like to express our gratitude to Lee Smith who created the Synergy Fund for the museum and the college. His efforts influence every aspect of our operations from exhibitions and communication to how we organize ideas and bring diverse audiences into the conversation and process. His energy and our vision has attracted the support of the prestigious funders Jane and Alan Lehman, LEF Foundation, the Maine Arts Commission, Margaret E. Burnham Charitable Trust, the Otis Fund and Charles W. Radcliffe '50 all of whom we are proud to work with to bring the best

possible experience to our audiences. This experience would not have been possible without the design of Virginia Valdes, the installation prowess of Bill Low and the curatorial expertise of Anthony Shostak.

-Mark H.C. Bessire

EDITOR'S NOTE

This exhibition catalog is a bit of an experiment, undertaken in an effort to explore alternatives to “the way things have always been done.” (After all, “the way things have always been done” is partly why we are currently faced with dire ecological problems.) A major component of it is a DVD instead of a printed tome, opted for largely to put temporal works such as dance, video, and music on more equal footing to the traditionally static arts of painting and sculpture.

At the heart of Green Horizons is the concept of synergy—the phenomenon that allows the creation of something greater than the sum of its parts. It is not collaboration (although collaborations were necessary parts of the process), but several somewhat independent projects that converged at the locus of the museum. Rather than trying to unify all the works by passing them through the filter of an essay written by an art historian or critic, which would have limited their interpretation to that of a single author, we have chosen to include multiple voices. Comments by the curator, the artists themselves, and by faculty members allow projects to be viewed from multiple perspectives in the hopes that a deeper appreciation of process and product may be gained. The tone of these comments is usually informal and conversational, and must be read with that in mind. Editing has been minimal and things are purposefully somewhat untidy, to better reflect the natural world which has served as the touchstone for this entire exhibition.

-Anthony Shostak



GREEN HORIZONS

Whether from the vantage of a sailboat on the ocean, a hilltop, or one's kitchen window, seeing green on the horizon brings the comfort of knowing that somewhere, within the field of vision, life teems, and that this verdant place might offer space for one to find heart's ease. Much of the history of humankind is the story of our attempts to find and hold on to that bit of green, through the development of agriculture and huge migrations of populations searching for green land to call their own to wars fought over vital resources, and even to our forays into bioengineering. By these endeavors, we are trying to create things—specifically shelter and food production systems—perpetually available to us, that will withstand the ravages of nature or that may be renewed or replenished with reasonable effort.

This activity amounts to an obsession with permanence. And with good reason; we need these things to live. However, our fixation is particularly strong when it comes to the perpetuation of unnecessary things we only *think* we need to live, such as our way of life—particularly our economic system. But permanence, especially with regard to a way of life, is predicated upon sustainability, and the irony of our situation is that our way of life, even to the most devoted head-in-the-sand observer, is not only unsustainable, but actually anti-sustainable.

Sustainability itself is a curious concept. Physicists tell us not to expect it, that the universe is moving inexorably toward entropy, and that all will eventually come to a cold, dark end. At the same time, businessmen of all stripes tell us with bright smiles that they are realizing sustainability here and now through their projects and



products. Who are we to believe? The answer (to people being honest with themselves) is that attaching the word “sustainable” to any human endeavor has more to do with our comfort with hypocrisy than with something that goes on and on for eternity. In reality, the only one of humankind’s creations guaranteed to outlive us is the collective junk pile that we have been building at an increasingly alarming rate.

Yet, the impossibility of sustainability does not diminish our moral obligation to strive for it. Who wants to leave our children a world exhausted and trashed for short-term gain? We would instead prefer to bequeath them an enriched world, one which is not merely as we found it, but improved by our activity so that they can build upon our successes rather than merely repeating our work. Indeed, sustainability is at the heart of the biological imperative—life itself is inextrica-

bly bound to the effort. Assuming that our species lasts so long, one can only wonder at how we might try to perpetuate our genes as the cosmic end draws near. And so, we have a dilemma that becomes more urgent each day as the sun slowly burns away its life-giving energy and moves moment by moment toward its own end: How do we sustain ourselves?

In creating this exhibition, I selected artists who engage with some aspect of this vexing problem. Following the model of cross-fertilization in biology, I invited others to contribute curatorially by bringing in another set of artists also grappling with branches of sustainability’s thorny bush. For some artists, the focus is on sustaining community. For others, it is embracing materials that are natural, renewable, and non-toxically biodegradable. Another group is concerned with searching for and defining nature. Still oth-

ers act as seers into possible futures or disappearing pasts. Every work in the exhibition is unflinching in its own way, either through the starkness with which it depicts the issue, or by its disarming poetic beauty. But, they are not negative. Each suggests that there are ways of living that are more sustainable than others, that although some paths we might travel lead to destruction, others will take us to more pleasant ends.

My own intuitions are that these better paths are not straight, but loop back upon themselves to form cycles. Indeed, some theorize that the universe itself is in a cycle of birth, expansion, contraction, and rebirth. And so, I find myself returning to my point of origin; in naming this exhibition, I sought for a title that would suggest searching, optimism, and movement toward something highly desirable, but not yet reached: Green Horizons.

-Anthony Shostak



Alexis Rockman

ALEXIS ROCKMAN



Alexis Rockman is an artist, explorer, and naturalist who examines the environmental plight of the earth as humanity continues on its current course of ecological devastation. In his works the observer sees how

time, place, and scale are reflected through the history and potential future of science. Rockman is one of the most influential artists working in the realm of science and art today.

Rockman's *Manifest Destiny*, (commissioned by the Brooklyn Museum of Art) depicts the artist's apocalyptic vision of global warming's impact. This painting provides a grand landscape, in the manner of the Hudson River Valley School, of Manhattan in the

year 5000 after three millennia of global warming. Its presence invites the discussion of complex issues, including community, prophecy, humankind's often-unintentional impact on local and global ecosystems, and how we react to those impacts.

summer 2008

AGNES DENES

One of the innovators of conceptual art, Agnes Denes approaches art from a multidisciplinary approach, transforming intellectual explorations into unique works of art. Her work analyzing the relationship of science and art made her a pioneer of ecological art and one of the first artists to initiate the environmental art movement. Her current work involves ecological, cultural, and social issues.

Agnes Denes has had more than 300 exhibitions across four continents. She has shown at the Museum of Modern Art, the Metropolitan Museum of Art, and the Whitney Museum in New York as well as

Documenta VI and the Venice Biennale. An artist of enormous vision, Denes has written four books and holds a doctorate in fine arts.

Invited by the Public Art Fund to create a project, Denes chose to reclaim a 2-acre area in Lower Manhattan. In a confrontation between culture and nature she planted and harvested a field of wheat in a landfill slated to become Battery Park City an urban development project constructed in the shadow of the World Trade Center, Wall Street and the Statue of Liberty. The critic Thomas McEvilley suggested that it raised issues about world hunger and the misuse of land and that the image of





Denes in the field harkens a comparison of the artists to Persephone and Demeter the goddesses of the harvest and earth.

Excerpted from
“Notes on a Visual Philosophy”

Once we abandon Newtonian static physics and accept Einstein’s four-dimensional principles of relativity, we question reality and know that even the laws of nature may undergo evolutionary changes. We even in-

vented the uncertainty principle, although we use it for other reasons.

We haven’t begun to understand the implications of this new, relativistic existence, where everything we had known and had believed now seems to be wrong. In this new dynamic world, objects become processes and forms are patterns in motion. Matter is a form of energy and our own human substance is but spinning velocity. There is

AGNES DENES

no solid matter and no empty space: time becomes earthbound reality but remains an enigma in the fourth dimension. We must create a new language, consider a transitory state of new illusion and layers of validity and accept the possibility that there may be no language to describe ultimate reality, beyond the language of visions.

I believe that art is the essence of life, as much as anything can be a true essence. It is extracted from existence by a process. Art is a reflection on life and an analysis of its structure. As such, art should be a great moving force shaping the future.

-Agnes Denes



Chris Jordan

CHRIS JORDAN

STATEMENT

Intolerable Beauty: Portraits of American Mass Consumption

Exploring around our country's shipping ports and industrial yards, where the accumulated detritus of our consumption is exposed to view like eroded layers in the Grand Canyon, I find evidence of a slow-motion apocalypse in progress. I am appalled by these scenes, and yet also drawn into them with awe and fascination. The immense scale of our consumption can appear desolate, macabre, oddly comical and ironic, and even darkly beautiful; for me its consistent feature is a staggering complexity. The pervasiveness of our consumerism holds a seductive kind of mob mentality. Collectively we are committing a vast and unsustainable act of taking, but we each are anonymous and no one is in charge or accountable for

the consequences. I fear that in this process we are doing irreparable harm to our planet and to our individual spirits.

As an American consumer myself, I am in no position to wag a finger; but I do know that when we reflect on a difficult question in the absence of an answer, our attention can turn inward, and in that space may exist the possibility of some evolution of thought or action. So my hope is that these photographs can serve as portals to a kind of cultural self-inquiry. It may not be the most comfortable terrain, but I have heard it said that in risking self-awareness, at least we know that we are awake.

-Chris Jordan





Michael Shaughnessy

MICHAEL SHAUGHNESSY

STATEMENT

For nearly twenty-five years, my work has involved the sculptural use of hay. It is a material that by its very nature is highly regenerative. It harkens to the earth, seasons, numerous rural traditions and common labor. Much of my work comes in the form of large temporary installations and sculptures. They employ two fundamental processes: binding and weaving. *New State: Rising* is a large woven sculpture. Like most of my other works it is built in response to the particular situation of the exhibition. Like the hay itself, much of my work grows with and for the exhibition, is harvested by its experience into memory and then plowed under to revive again or to nourish future work. While much of my work is of a more formal nature it is inherently connected to the theme of the exhibition by virtue of material and process however in this regard I also choose to forge a connection symbolically as well.

While initially I had considered a number of options for the exhibition, the idea for a large five-pointed star came rather quickly to mind. It was a form I used in a prior exhibition twenty years ago but in a very different way. At that time it was horizontal, and edged by found steel forms. For this exhibition the star is a symbol that seemed to be both pertinent,



and standing, rather than horizontally, to have great potential resonance. I knew that the space could hold and even beckoned something vertical and of a large scale. I very much wanted it to be something that equally looks back at the viewer as it is looked upon. It is less about how it is looked at and more how it presents itself. I wanted it to be less a critique and



MICHAEL SHAUGHNESSY

more a beacon, symbolizing if not where we are going what we should aspire toward. As a symbol the five-pointed star is very much associated with power, fame, and might. I wanted to take the symbol and transform it. In effect, recasting and reclaiming it. Monumental and structured, it is created of a simple material and a common process. As such, it is softened and earth-bound. It combines the forces of structure, design, and simple common labor woven into a symbol of political will. It is built on tradition but with a view toward a collective future.

In many regards this project is a bit different from what I have done in the past. In the physical sense it is far more exactly engineered. By virtue of the constraints of time and the nature of a group exhibition it was built off-site in a barn in Windham, Maine. Constructed of five identical parts, it was transferred to the Museum. While most of my works are built on-site over a week or two with many people, this took a small group three to four weeks to create and only two to three days to install. Another difference is that it is a geometric work when most of my prior works have been more organic. It owes as much to its engineering and structure as to the hay with which it is woven. Much of its resonance exists in the fact that it is an unruly material which, while maintaining its character, unexpectedly stands as it does. In ways, I find this most hopeful. It is a combination of seemingly contradictory elements; the simple and the complex; the traditional and the contemporary; political power and common endeavour; and ultimately the earth and the sky.

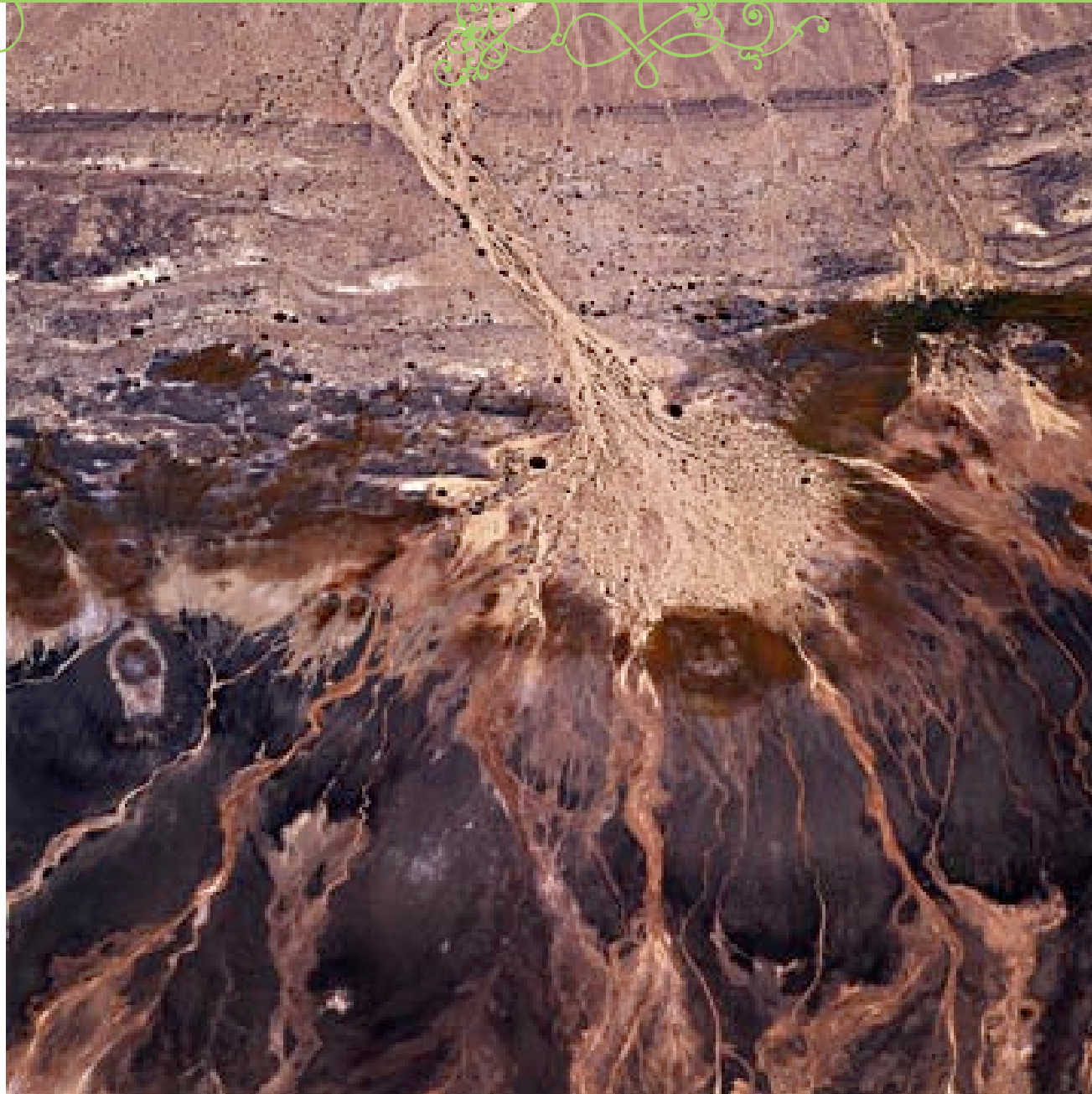
-Michael Shaughnessy



***It harkens to
the earth, seasons,
numerous rural traditions
and common labor.***

DAVID MAISEL

DAVID MAISEL



David Maisel's vertiginous views of wasted landscapes are as unsettling as they are beautiful. Lacking horizons or other familiar references, the land patterns are flattened into an abstract of shapes not easily recognized as a space in the real world. Included in *Green Horizons* are two of his photographs of California's Owens Valley, an area of extreme human intervention.

When the Owens River and Owens Lake were drained to provide water to Los Angeles, huge seeps of carcinogenic salts emerged in the wake of the water. Containing arsenic, cadmium, chlorine, and a host of other elements, the salts are easily blown into the air, polluting vast territories downwind. The colorful salts and mesmerizing patterns left by erosion give

an uneasy attractiveness to an otherwise deadly scene. Today, governmental bodies are deeply concerned with the site, and efforts are underway to contain, mitigate, and even eliminate the pollution.

These images and the history of Owens Valley are a reminder that the best intentions sometimes pave a road to hellish ends. This cannot be forgotten when pondering any facet of sustainability.



Wasteland

VIRGINIA VALDES

STATEMENT

Abundant, cheap energy is what fuels overpopulation and sprawl. Consider a place where one can no longer send his waste to a dump or count on the prosthetic aides of industrial civilization but must find ways to accommodate his trash within his own personal habitat. Paving, urban sprawl, and overdevelopment have exhausted our resources to the point where our own human strength is the only energy available to power-up what remains of our virtual worlds.

Being constructed with the refuse of homo industrialis, this installation grapples with

how a human habitat filled with non-recyclable and non-biodegradable material goods not only inexorably eliminates others and, ultimately, all life, but increases the artificial and cultural divide between humans and their biological environment.

Wasteland is a call to undo our electrical appetites and get back to the garden. It begs the question what could happen if we don't cohabitate with nature and understand how our addictive, consumptive habits can cause our landscapes to disappear and only reappear as illusions.

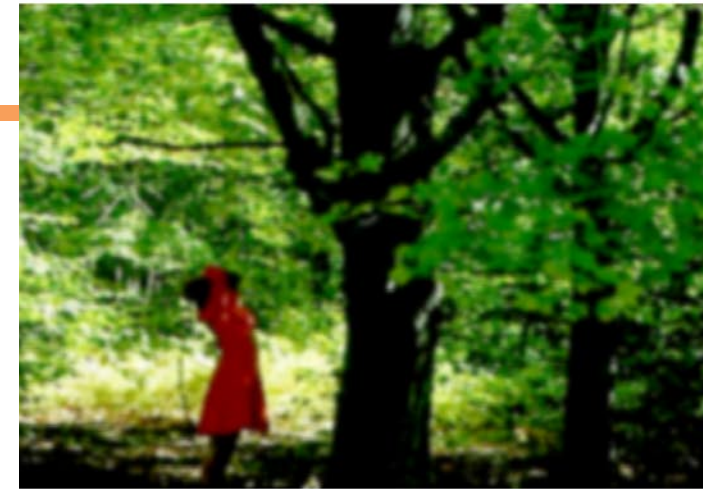
-Virginia Valdes



VIRGINIA VALDES

Through her multimedia installation *Wasteland*, Virginia Valdes rubs our collective nose in the absolute mess we've been making of our world. By repurposing nonbiodegradable refuse as decoration in a fanciful household interior of the not-so-distant future, she forces us to consider what life will be like when the landscape all around us has been trashed, when not a single space on earth has been left without free of litter and industrial invasion. The walls of her dwelling are decorated with reminders of the glory days of a consumer society, with advertising slogans cheerfully adding nostalgic color to an otherwise dark space. Video monitors glow eerily, showing images of leaves falling from trees, a young woman frolicking in honey-colored autumnal landscapes, the artist communicating with a tree, and

harvesting potatoes from her home garden, bedecked in an elegant evening gown. While this image is in humorous opposition to Van Gogh's *Potato Eaters*, the joke is serious. She invites us to ponder a world in which the very concept of glamour needs to be rethought—a huge shift in aesthetics that places essential labors like producing food at a much higher level of appreciation than they enjoy today. But the videos are not readily seen. The viewer must be motivated to power the monitors by mounting a pedal generator. Valdes's insinuation that electricity is only to be had by those willing to make it themselves is clever, as it suggests that breakdowns in power structures larger than just the electrical grid are imminent. Consumerism careering forward at ever-increasing rates is the largest of supports



propping up our economic and political systems. The future envisioned by Valdes is one in which that consumer economy has collapsed under its own weight, leaving only an endless wasted world in its wake.

COLLABORATORS:

DAVID BUTCHER, creator of the Pedal Powered Generator

LAURENT BRONDEL

Music for all videos

ART ASSISTANTS:

Erin Reed, Renee Castonguay, Nick Diconzo, Beatriz Valdes, Crystal Nicholas, Liz Baumhauff, Victoria Rogers, Rachel Grover, Lianne Lewin, Kelley Eland, Amy Pike, Daecia Dow, Katie Warren, Brittany Barrett, Lorraine Gedat, Victoria Jackson, Lana Wheeler, Angela Lyons, Malaney Cassano, and Pamela Chodosh.

COMMUNITY ASSISTANCE:

Warren Sessions, Oxford County Regional Solid Waste Corporation Buckfield Transfer Station



BECAUSE FOR THE PERSON WHO HAS EVERYTHING, WE HAVE EVERYTHING ELSE. JUST DO IT WORTH IT.



anne-katrin spiess

STATEMENT

This project was inspired by the very first sentence of the introductory flyer to the exhibition, declaring that the show is intended to be “off the grid.” I decided to research various means of transportation from New York City to Bates College in order to find out which ones would be the least environmentally harmful, and investigated how much CO₂ I would be producing along the way. All data were collected in a Microsoft Excel document, which I eventually reproduced onto the gallery wall.

As, not surprisingly, walking and bicycling turned out to be the two least environ-

mentally harmful ways to journey to Bates College. I decided to undertake the trip to install the CO₂ wall chart by crossing five states by bike. The ride took eight days and turned out to be an absolutely extraordinary experience filled with many unexpected “Eco-encounters” along the way.

-Anne-Katrin Spiess

ANNE-KATRIN SPIESS



mark silber

MARK SILBER

STATEMENT

FROM SEED TO HARVEST, FROM HARVEST TO SEED

Construction:

The museum exhibit is a cylindrical structure, composed of two counter-rotating vitrines (backlit photographic transparencies two feet wide and 15.8 feet long – five feet in diameter) above a solid white cylinder, containing lighting and drive mechanism. The vitrines are practical and symbolic. Their purpose is to define the process of gardening and the essentials of seed-saving. The structure is aesthetically signifi-

cant, politically rousing, and symbolically probing. The top vitrine shows how plants are started from seeds. The bottom shows how seeds are created by plants. While most non-gardeners have a tendency to think of time as linear, farmers often see time as recurrent. A circle and rotation of the cylinders, represents continuity and recurrence. The two vitrines are designed with approximately 120 color photographs detailing the nature of the garden and the nature of seed production.

Seed production, as reproduction, is a continuous process. Therefore, a gardening year is scheduled to dictate daily activ-





MARK SILBER

ity, constantly under stress. Work has to be accomplished according to “windows” in the weather and according to calendric reminders. Gardeners start with the knowledge of what the garden will produce from seed and continue with the knowledge of what we must do to produce seed, to continue life yet another year. Seed saving is an acknowledgment, a reiteration, that we will witness life again, not only the life of the plant, but our own life.

The DVD, instead of having pictures of the exhibit, will contain a presentation composed of photographs which make up the vitrines.

Symbolism of the garden:

A garden is a source of sustenance – visual, olfactory, aural, and, of course, gastronomic. Gardeners care about the aesthetics of

the garden. Gardeners also want to share the pleasure of the gardening experience. A gardener’s work may be solitary but a gardener’s pleasure is communal. What a gardener creates from a “clean slate” – is a “gardening experience.” In that respect, I feel that there are two items that are significant in the course of human existence.

First, that we, from time immemorial, have placed a premium on gardens – the Garden of Eden, the Gardens of Babylon, the Versailles, and even the shrubs in a suburban yard. Gardens symbolize our earthly and supernatural universes, representing beauty, peace, contemplation, and soulful restoration.

Second, gardens imply continuity. We have to continually care for our creations, which require an inordinate amount of time.

MARK SILBER

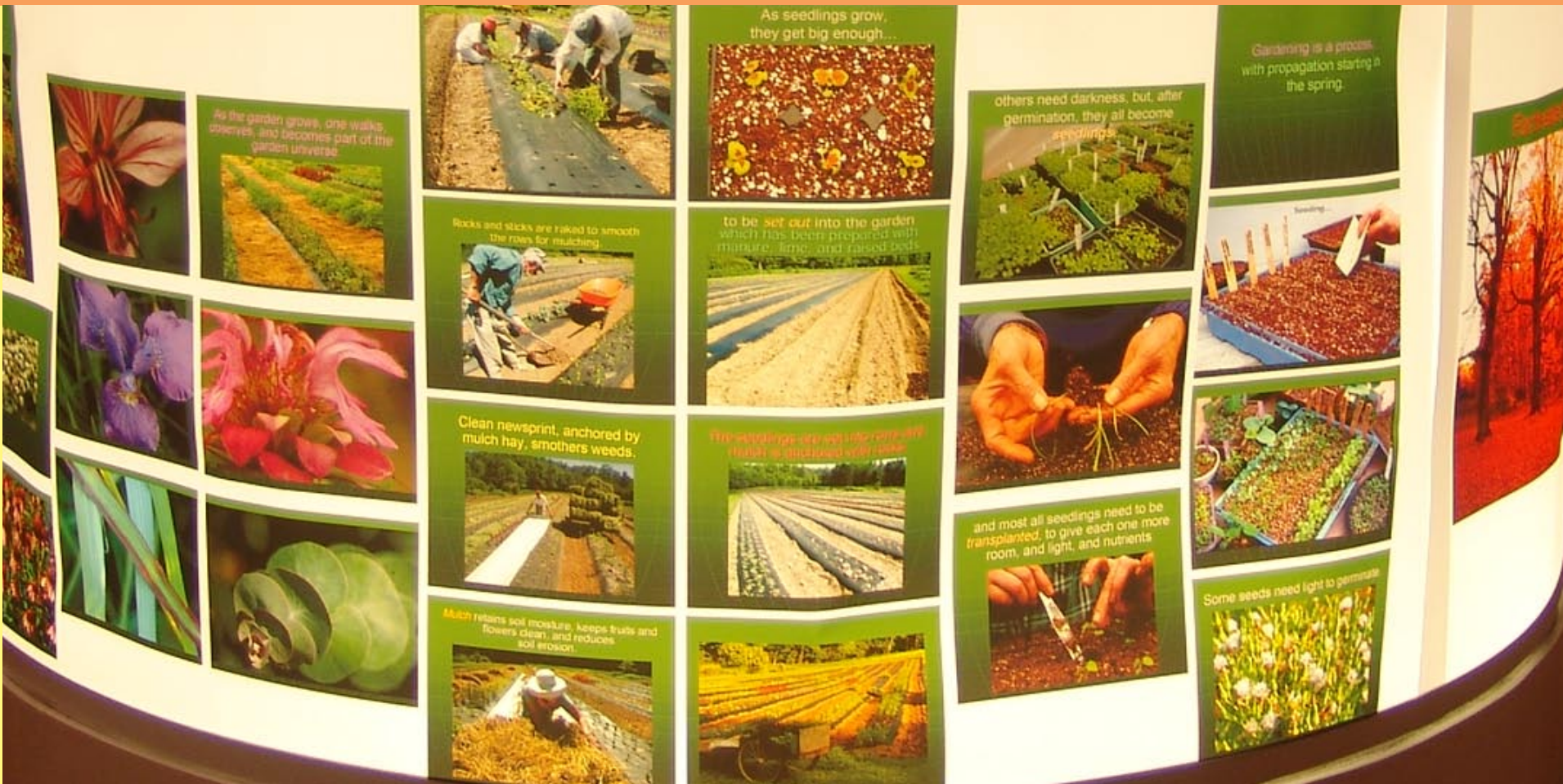
Yet, we value the creativity that designing a garden entails. We value the effort, the reward, and the implications of our investment. Ultimately, gardening is a process of sharing. Gardening allows an individual to have a tenuous semblance of control of his/her existence but gardening also allows an individual to share his/her creation with friends, neighbors, and others, meaningful to the individual – a democratizing process.

Political aspects of seed-saving:

Whenever there is a question of control of resources or economy, we deal with a notion of politics. In just a short period of time, over the past one hundred years, seed production, has become commercialized to an extent where control of seed supply is now in the hands of a few major corporations. In fact, in the past three decades,

we have witnessed a series of consolidations, buyouts, and mergers of many smaller companies, where, even the smallest retailers of seeds now offer mostly hybrid and genetically engineered seeds. That means that not only the supply of seeds is limited by those in the corporate boardroom, but also that the process of sustainability in gardening, as in other aspects of civilized existence, is co-opted by others. Neither hybrid seeds nor genetically-engineered seeds (GE) may be, practically or legally, saved.

Hybrid seeds are designed to produce a superior fruit. However, the fruit may neither produce seeds nor the progeny “true” to the parent. Moreover, GE seeds are



protected by patents, dictating who actually owns the seed (and, thereby, life) and limiting the production of seed only to the agents of the owners of the seeds.

Traditionally, seed saving has also been a keenly democratic process. Farmers and gardeners planted seeds and saved surplus for the next season. They traded and se-

lected seeds. When corporations undermine our ability to save seeds by producing un-savable seeds, we all are endangered. Though, by controlling seed availability, corporations stimulate economic activity, they inherently endanger life in the smallest village in Bangladesh and on the largest farm in the Midwest. Finally, hybrid and Genetically Engineered plants may cross with closely related wild plants, a cross that may lead to the demise of the genetically similar species.

My quest for sustainability:

It was approximately thirty-five years ago that I and my wife, Terry Silber, started gardening in Maine. Until 1978, we commuted to Sumner from Boston, where Terry was Art Director of The Atlantic and I was a photojournalist and later a Ph.D.

candidate in Anthropology at Boston University. Our transition from urban to rural life was detailed in a classic book of the back-to-the-land movement *A Small Farm in Maine*, published by Houghton Mifflin in 1988. Terry and I, as a consequence of our working the land, also co-authored two horticultural books on gardening and seed saving.

As we started a commercial organic farm – Hedgehog Hill Farm, early in the nineteen seventies, we began to organize farmers markets and sell local produce to restaurants and institutions. This happened long before the current trend, where many now recognize the importance of local production and the tragic consequences of demise of small family farms. In our farming, we grew vegetables, herbs, and flowers, but

we not only produced plants, we produced knowledge, envisioning our institution to be an educational center. We offered workshops and lectures, teaching others what we learned empirically.

When we started farming, our enterprise was unique. We shared with others our knowledge and enthusiasm for sustainability. Terry passed away in 2003 and I closed the farm, as a commercial enterprise, in 2006. But gardening, for my sustenance, continues. As a gardener, a farmer, a photographer, and an anthropologist, I have pursued a lifestyle to diminish the footprint of my existence on the delicate planet Earth. My experiences have influenced me to convey the knowledge that, because life is fragile, because our environment is fragile, we should care to save the seeds of our future.

-Mark Silber



Core Samples

This body of work is a suite of prints that combines my ongoing interest in sacred geometry, transformation and chance. The images all begin by printing rust from discarded steel plates onto dampened paper. The random staining and embedding of color and texture set the print in motion and offer me direction. The rust is unpredictable and surprising. At this stage of the process I find that I need to send some prints through the press numerous times, while other pass through only once. Hand-made and other collected papers may be included as a chine colle at this time of the printing process

My affinity for old maps and geometry contribute to my sensibilities and are undercurrents of this work. The geometry, which literally means earth's measure, is a common tool used to diagram the understanding of the patterns and ratios of our complex universe. The geometric fragments, which are printed here, are from squaring the circle. This diagram is an effort to balance the earthly square with the heavenly circle so that they have the same perimeter or occasionally, the same area. They allude to resolution and contrast with the random qualities of the rust. During the print process I search for some personal balance between the geometry and embedded rust. When the image is satisfying, I stop working.

KAREN ADRIENNE



KAREN ADRIENNE

I started working with rust as a low impact material that could be reconfigured in the long tradition of etching. It was sustainable and an extension of the less toxic printmaking processes I have been using for the last ten years.

For the suite Core Samples, the mordant was air and the images created from the ensuing rust. The oxidation process is documented and manipulated like ink on paper. The process was direct and safe. It also reflected the passage of time, change, and chance that were part of the conceptual investigation.



Sustaining Community and the Development of ARTDOGS

In starting the business ARTDOGS I wanted to form a sustainable community of artists that would have an impact on each other as well as on the cultural and economic growth of a city. To realize this goal I purchased a four storey brick building in the historic downtown of Gardiner, Maine in June 2004. My vision is that working artists have more opportunities and strength working together.

The building that is home to ARTDOGS is located at 275-277 Water Street, has a rich history and has been a vital part of the Gardiner downtown since 1864, when it was a dry goods store. Over the years it has housed a confectionery (1872), a music

store (1886), millinery (1895), shoe store (1909), clothing store (1920), and more. The building survived the Gardiner fire of 1888. There were years of patching and concealing the wear of the previous residents. We tried to reuse as much of the original wood from the demolition for the renovation. Even so, we took out over 4 tons of debris by hand.

After a year of intense work the top three floors contained six beautifully renovated artist studios, a communal kitchen, and one artist's live in residence which occupies the whole top floor. These studios are leased to all levels of practicing artists. What ARTDOGS provides is a place for artists to gather, work and interact so they can share their ideas with each other and the community. This feeds the surrounding

community by bringing artists to work in this city. But more importantly, these artists provide a cultural center for the community. One of the first and ongoing efforts of the ARTDOGS community of artists was to establish Artwalk Gardiner. This event happens four times annually. We open our studios and match local artists with downtown merchants to create and evening of art and community. We bring 200-300 people to the downtown during these events.

August 2007 marks the last phase of renovation, one more ton of debris, and the realization of a long held dream: the ground floor has been transformed into an open access fine art press. Circling the Square Fine Art Press gives artists in the Central Maine area the opportunity to build a community of artists that will create and market origi-

nal fine art prints. The Fine Art Press offers artists the freedom to work independently and cooperatively in a supportive, safe environment. The studio can accommodate artists working in the following media: Relief, Silkscreen (acrylic inks only), Intaglio (etch copper only), and a variety of monotype and monoprint processes.

After three years of hard work, much laughter and many tears, I believe my vision for a sustainable art community can be both seen and enjoyed.

-Karen Adrienne

Beth O'Halloran

BETH O'HALLORAN

Beth O'Halloran spent much of her childhood in Lewiston, where her family had built and operated the Libby Mill. *Breaking Falls* depicts the Androscoggin River's Great Falls before two "Indian Head" profiles were blasted away to accommodate a municipal water system. The image's title, blurring, and dissipation allude to facets of memory/remembering; presence/absence; history/forgetting; creation/destruction. Feeling a keen sense of responsibility for the degradation of the river at the hands of her forebears, O'Halloran reminds herself and us that in shaping our community and livelihoods, we have indelibly written our mark on our natural resources. She further invites us to consider how being conscious of history guides our next actions.



STATEMENT

My practice is based on using photographic reference material as the source for abstract paintings and works on paper based on the photographs being photocopied and perforated into tiny discs using a paper puncher. My own enquiries hinge on investigations of 'in-between' states, as in the space on a horizon when water and air are indistinguishable or questioning the shift from representation to abstraction, from the physical to the ephemeral.

In creating a work for Green Horizons, I was motivated to make a piece specifically relevant to environmental concerns of Lewiston which also referenced my own history with the city. The Libbey Mill had

been in my family for generations and I had remembered an old postcard image of the falls rushing past the mill when the Indian Head and the Old Man profiles were still perfectly intact. I remembered the concerns over water pollution from the mills along the Androscoggin and the subsequent changes necessary to bring back the healthy salmon population. I am interested in the nostalgia of my personal connection to the place and for the loss through erosion of much of the anthropomorphic aspects of the view.

Initially, I tried doing the piece manually with a paper-puncher, but eventually the concerns of curled paper and the hours required to install brought about a brain-

wave of technological approaches. By scanning an antique postcard image and then punching tiny holes in the image using Photoshop layers, I produced an image which dissipated and emphasized the importance of the resurgence of air and water as the rocks and buildings begin to fade. Working digitally also made traveling from Dublin to Lewiston to install the work unnecessary; only the file had to make the transatlantic trip and the work was printed in Maine on wallpaper. I will definitely use this method again, as the discovery of a digital way to create the images is really liberating.

This exhibition coincided with my pregnancy and my daughter's birth. All three

of these events heightened my concern for any chemicals I might have been using in studio or pouring down my sink. By making the piece digitally I didn't need any glues or aerosol fixatives.

There is an inherently optimistic tone to this exhibition which is refreshing. With recent dramatic floods and droughts in Europe, the concerns of global warming are becoming ever more tangible. But rather than feel immobilised with fear, events such as Green Horizons allow for heightened awareness and hence action on a personal level.

-Beth O'Halloran



BEEHIVE COLLECTIVE

STATEMENT

The Beehive Collective is a multi-faceted organism. We collaborate to create visual narratives that break down and expose the circuitry of really complex and overwhelming political/social issues, turning them into a more digestible format that appeals to the visual learner who can process this sort of information ore readily through images than in highbrow lectures or books. We also are the stewards of a 100 year old farmers' Grange Hall in Machias, Maine, where in the final period of our restoration we host community events and buzz around busily from dawn till dusk. Everything we do is non-profit and 100% volunteer driven.

The Bees are based in Eastern Maine, but are a very decentralized swarm spread throughout Canada, Mexico, the United States and Europe. Our mission is to cross-pollinate the grassroots, by building connections between activists that use words, and those that speak in pictures, to help create more accessible, powerful campaigns for the important issues of our time. We envision a world where cultural work and popular education isn't segregated from the "box" of how movements for social change speak to issues and we think that organizers in the U.S. have a lot to learn from our counterparts in Latin America for implementing this shift.

- Beehive Collective





*SEITU JONES
Collard Green Seed Bomb, 2007*

email rant-a-tant



Anthony Shostak:

Is there a social imperative for today's artists to engage with being "green"?

from Virginia Valdes:

It is imperative as an individual living in today's society to engage, in one form or another, in finding alternative ways to our sustained existence without heavily relying on depleting resources, exploiting others, or gang raping Mother Nature.

As an artist I am not the preacher, philosopher, scientist, teacher or advocate for being green. If anything my role is to be stimulated by my surroundings and everyday experiences and react in the most unconventional way possible while somehow touching upon a truth that lies hidden beneath the polished surface. Making fun, exaggerating, and distorting one's reality is probably a surrealist sensibility I find enticing to emulate and work from as an artist. Working within the zeitgeist before it actually hits the mainstream in a watered-down censored format is what I strive to do. Is that green? My work is not a wake up call. I just want to stimulate your senses and make you question the questions you've probably already asked yourself time and time again.

Is it imperative to think before you...
buy something
choose the easy/cheap route
take the second car trip to the store for a pack of cigarettes
buy organic veggies in plastics?
Yes.

Is it imperative to have conversations with our students who consume inordinate amounts of packaged food, think that an

\$80,000 educational "investment" will guarantee them a world of infinite luxury item goods, and find it normal to engage in digital communities without having the physical aspect of someone's touch, breath or presence in their personal space? Yes

The word green is yet another fashionably correct word that masks truths with a fine veneer of dogoodership. Everyone and every company even Walmart is trying to be green now. The facts have been known for a long time but the trend has just recently hit the mainstream. Should we water "green" down to make it easily accessible/palatable to all without too much work involved? Because of the mainstreaming of this long known problem I'm finding it harder to want to associate myself with

the word "green." Somehow it seems artificial and highly opportunistic. Maybe I'm just cynical. Maybe it's the packaging process America has mastered that makes me skeptical.

How about being black? Can you believe the new tag line for green; **"Green is the new Black". Give me a fucking break.** It's cool to be green, don't you know? That's right, go clean out your compost toilet that is over-

flooding. Go weed your garden while being attacked by black flies, and ticks. Go mow your acres of land by hand, drive your bike to work everyday in the freezing winter, chop down a few trees, split it, stack it, season it and then get it from outside when it's 10 below and the fire's gone out and you don't have oil heat back up. Go wash your clothes by hand, can and freeze as much as possible for the winter and tend to your root cellar diligently. Don't forget to learn how to properly feed, butcher, bleed, feather, cure, cook and store your food. And take a cold shower, it's good for you and keeps your blood circulating, because in essence you don't really have a choice since the day hasn't been sunny and the solar panels haven't heated your water. Life is but a dream, So green so green.

As an artist to engage in being green, what does that mean? Should I stop using chemicals to develop film and make prints? Should I throw my computer out the window along with my Epson printer and all its ink cartridges? Should I refrain from buying more plastic like dv tapes, dvds and cds to record my work on and send it off to someone who will probably throw it away in the garbage? Should I stop using technology because of all the waste and toxic chemicals it produces along with the harmful yet not completely proven effects of radio wave emissions? Should I disengage from this email list where I can take my time to answer a question without the spontaneity of a true conversation with facial expressions, body gestures, and the pheromones of others affecting my behavior and reactions? I'd say

I'm not very green looking at it from this perspective.

I think the question lies more in what we do as individuals in our daily lives not just as artists. What can we plant? What can we learn to help us live better, healthier and more communal lives? How do we reconnect with the living and unplug from the rest?

How do we bring back the local baker, shoe repairman, milkman, seamstress, deli, café to our neighborhoods and towns?

How do we as a community learn to barter again and find local people to trade our goods with? What does this have to do with art and green? Nothing and everything. I don't feel that being an artist is what makes me "green". But "mildly green" with shades of blue and black is a lifestyle I have chosen in the hopes of changing my habits and patterns so well programmed into me from years and years of consumer culture addiction, information overload, sensory deprivation, penny saving tips, and fast food. **As an artist, I'm regurgitating my sentiments about my role in society and where it has brought me; into a colorful and enticing pool of plastic vomit.**

GO GREEN! We can do it! Plant those seeds. Work together for a better, greener, cleaner future. I'm lovin it.





Anthony Shostak:

Is there a social imperative for today's artists to engage with being "green"?

from Jonathan Skinner:

How can arts respond to imperatives? Inevitably they must, but by turning imperatives into possibles. The response is sustainable when the imperatives of the marketplace generate explorations rather than constraints.

Explorations are constraints self-imposed. With social understanding the constraint reveals a process. (I'm thinking of Oulipo, the "workshop of potential literature," founded in 1960 by Raymond Queneau, Georges Perec, Italo Calvino, Jacques Roubaud and others. Oulipo dedicated itself to generating constrained writing techniques, as a search for "new structures and patterns which may be used by writers in any way they enjoy.") Sustainability could be a kind of constraint, if self-imposed.

One definition of "sustainable," the top word of 2006 according to Global Language Monitor,* is "self-generating." How is this a social value? The design of George W. Bush's house appears to be vastly more "sustainable" than that of Al Gore's.** And he probably eats more organic food than just about anyone around.

* http://www.languagemonitor.com/Top_Word_Lists.html

** <http://www.usatoday.com/news/washington/2001-04-13-bush-house.htm>

Is George Bush a closet green? Is the mar-

ketplace social? A social imperative presumably looks beyond the marketplace, hoping to reflect more than capital.

It is NOT for the sake of good works that we ask aesthetics to engage, or respond to social imperatives. Aesthetics can rarely be engaged in the shake-splitting way Virginia so eloquently drives home. For another metaphor, I love Thoreau's relation of literature to compost—but it's probably more fanciful than the present circumstances warrant.

We ask aesthetics to engage because we want art with traction. We want the work to tug on us in some way, equal to the tugging we feel in our daily lives. And equal to the relentless friction we now feel, if we are awake, if we care, if we love children, if we choose to see to the future, on a collective, planetary scale.

We want in aesthetics what Stevens called the "pressure of reality." Looking back, we see that this alone did not make good works. Good works in the narrowest sense are whether we resist or collaborate. How we use and get and spend.

In a wider sense what makes a work "good" can vary wildly. Good works is giving back more than we get. Which brings us round to Thoreau's compost. Maybe his analogy isn't so fanciful, after all.

I like what Thoreau says about "useful ignorance": letting areas of the brain lie fall-

ow, honoring unproductive time, listening to the silent intervals in our speech, slowing up . . .

Imperatives are part of the extractive time use that's gotten us into the present collective pickle. (I'm thinking of the capitalist approach to time as an extractive resource.) Imperatives ratchet up. We need slowing down. How to say that without ratcheting it up?

I'm saying "sustainable imperative" is an oxymoron. I'm saying the sustainability crisis is about time. In both senses of that phrase. I'm saying there's a problem with words. We literally are not seeing what we are saying.

Where can we look to understand the failure of the environmental movement to date, and the success of the extractors? Language. Sure, the extractors abuse language (all publicity does), but at least they're DOING something with it, however vicariously. (See George Lakoff for an exploration of how "gay marriage" trumps "global warming" among the U.S. electorate.) What have environmentalists done with language? "Sustainability" may be just one of the many sorry examples.

One could ask this, as well, of language taken in the wider sense to include visual practices. But as a language artist in the more limited sense, engagement brings me back to how I respond to a general abuse of words. The day George Bush uttered the word "sustainable," I knew I would have to think long and hard before ever using that word again.

When it becomes a mantra, I reach for my . . .

See, for example, www.novozymes.com:

Some day you're going to be using this in your cars. And when that happens, that will make us less dependent on foreign oil and better stewards of the environment, said President Bush, holding up a bottle of fuel ethanol. And the context: "On a recent visit to Novozymes North America, United States President George W. Bush stated that it was time to transition from the oil age and invest in a more sustainable future. Sustainability has been a mantra for Novozymes from the start, and the company underscores this commitment by supplying more than half of the enzymes used to produce ethanol in the USA."

Novozymes is a biotech corporation based in Denmark. When you go to the "history" page of this company's website, the canvas is blank.

According to Jean Ziegler, UN special rapporteur on the right to food, diverting sugar and maize for biofuels could lead to hundreds of thousands of deaths from hunger worldwide.

Art alone does not make good works. But let what art does well, in its investigation of materials, make a REAL difference. Calling those investigations in social fields where the response is indeterminate. I think this is calling for more than public art: sometimes it entails artists going "undercover," in ways that capital will not easily acknowl-



Jonathan Skinner continues...

edge. And it entails the venues and promoters and sustainers of art taking risks.

How does art make the aesthetic imperative exploratory, if not by engaging in good works? Or in works of some kind . . . Perhaps artists should feel special responsibility for the planetary pickle we now find ourselves in. For a collective failure of imagination. Artists, after all, are “antennae of the race” (to paraphrase Ezra Pound, a language artist who did not necessarily practice good works, according to some; though according to others, he was a most generous human being). Let’s practice what artist, builder and writer Robert Kocik calls “Compunction Acquisition.” Let’s outsource aesthetics, across disciplines, into practical realms discounted since modernists deployed their aesthetic apartheid with the term “applied arts.”

I’m all for the aesthetic function, and hold out for artistic independence. But who says works need make organic wholes, nowadays? Let the aesthetic and the good work inhabit parallel, even juxtaposed, universes—without demanding they drive into and reinforce one another, on the same plane. Let the information exchanged through the subterranean transits of “useful ignorance,” of a life lived (as all are) in more than one way, inform the work in unpredictable ways. What matters is that the same persons, the same communities, be doing, responding to, both kinds of works.

Deliver radical art to the audiences least likely to encounter it. Be open to the art least likely to influence your radical poli-

tics. And let’s pursue exhibitions that are not about showcasing individual talent but about generating responses to a particular set of questions. In this sense, be “experimental.”

Synergy might be a good term for this kind of exchange, though it implies a suspicious degree of coordination. A little too organic . . . But I think the collaborations facilitated by this exhibition’s “Synergy Grants”—between artists, faculty, students and workers in the L/A community—do model something like the multidimensional, experimental work artists now are called on to make. And that communities, and art institutions, are now called on to engage.

I should say that such engagement entails taking seriously the “effects” of art (and not just its concepts), that art literally changes the world, and that it can do more than offer an ironic commentary on where we already know ourselves to be. Art, in a sense, is magic—especially now that, in the collapsing of “nature vs. nurture,” it has biotech to compete with.

I think that, above all, this positive, integrated approach to the artistic work characterizes the best of what our exhibition brings to the question of “sustainability.”





Anthony Shostak:

Is there a social imperative for today's artists to engage with being "green"?

From Michael Shaughnessy:

Bless you Virginia!!

What a rant. I have a bit of a soap box I want to stand on myself in this thread but I would like to add that I share many of your same sentiments. It may seem a bit disconnected. But the short of it is, If you do not want to read the entire rant summed up in two words. Design and Policy*.

Here goes*.

I am a bit concerned with how we approach this whole notion of being green. I am concerned with the act of identifying ourselves as such. Sustainability is too important to lack an ability to be sustainable itself by be-

ing a fashion or a commodity. **Hence, I am concerned with both the idea of an imperative and the act of "being".** I

would hate to see what should be a cultural shift become a lifestyle choice or a fashion that can role in and role out. It should become a baseline for how we live. More apart of our unconscious selves than a conscious endeavour or a self prescribed state of being. While it is important the shift comes with each of us, it is also important to work for and demand a change in our governing to do and being able to actually take the course once they realize it. However the most strident changes can be made real through political action and/or economic incentive. (Of-

fer canvas bags at the grocery store and then charge a dollar for the disposable ones. It's done in other countries. They have adapted. Buy in bulk and save money. We have Pay-per-bag trash pickup. It is a 1.25, although it should be 2.50, but none the less recycling has gone way up and real costs per capata for disposal have gone down.) Much of what we take for granted now and that is accepted as a tremendous public good and an economic enhancement met with fierce opposition initially.

A few broad examples would be the clean water act to the bottle bill to outlawing billboards to pay-per-bag trash removal all changes that were controversial and apposed at the time. These were legislatively enacted policies that have instigated common practice and few (other than those that stand to gain financially) would ever want to overturn. These are policies that are rooted in public awareness and made real by citizen action and political will. Political will exists in direct proportion to the forces that are placed on those that make the decisions.

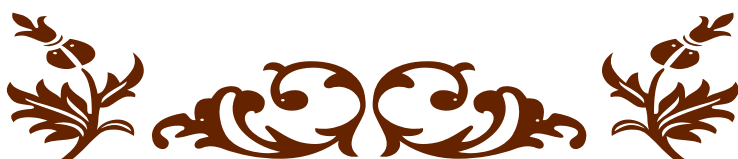
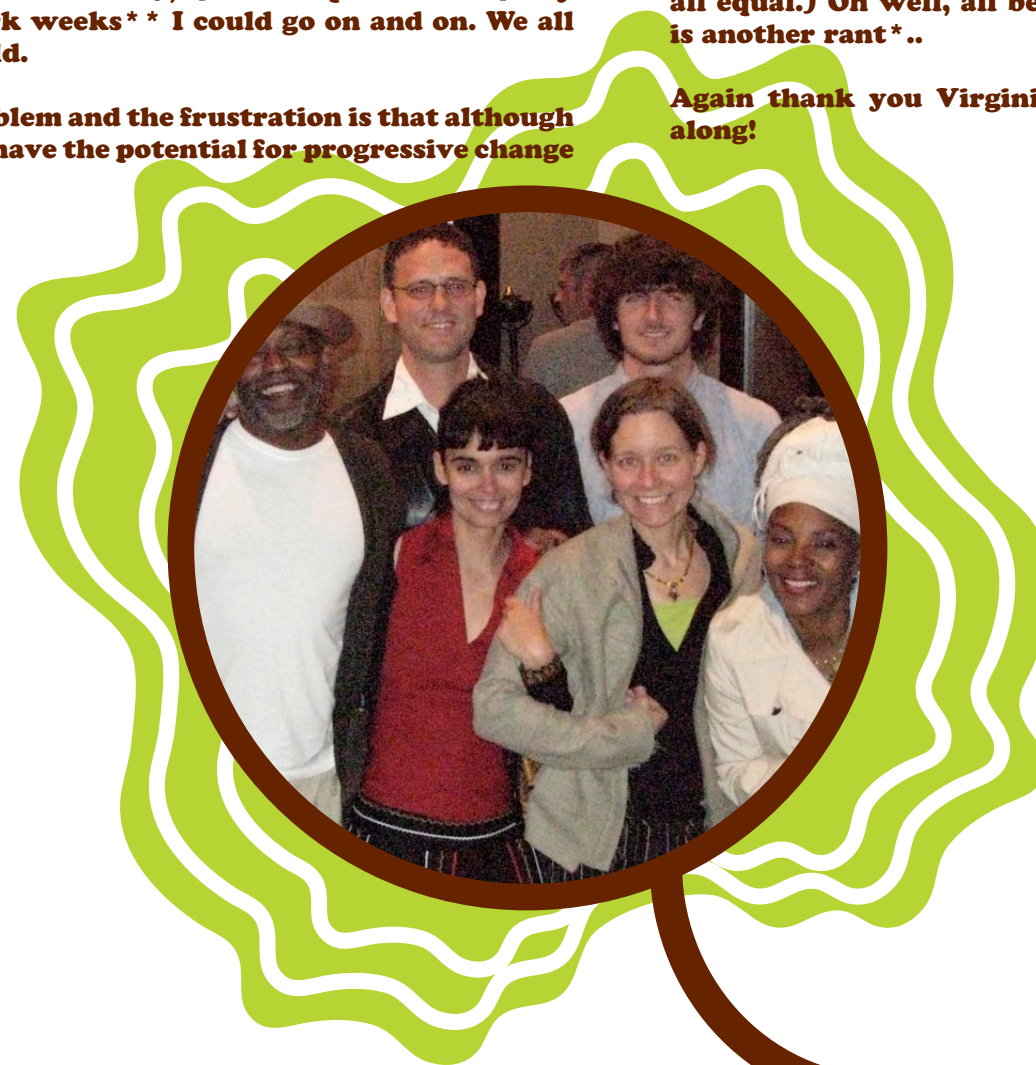
In short we need green policies that require the public and most importantly the market forces to be green. These can both create a better environment, offer economic benefits and build stronger communities for example: raise CAFÉ Standards increase the fees on gas to reflect the real impacts, and 1) develop, as we once had, broad based public transportation systems. (Lets start with sidewalks and foot paths and then look at transportation systems to every small town.

We should be able to take a bus from Norway, Me to Portland 4 times a day) 2) policies and support for alternative fuel and localized power sources. (Passive and active solar, electric, wind etc.) 3) Give incentives through tax policies, develop marketable design options, and land use policies that mitigate sprawl and thus are able to build better stronger communities (take a suburban development cluster the housing, throw in common goods retail, require small scale, add office space, parks, a few block parties and a pub and require it to be pedestrian oriented. Stir doesn't shake and * presto change* you have village. Keep going and rap it around low impact development strategies and incentives), 4 Offer options for 4 day work weeks** I could go on and on. We all could.

Problem and the frustration is that although we have the potential for progressive change

due to the lock corporations, special interests, and god love the Unions! but them too have on our political process by virtue of our systems for campaign finance, **few will ever see the light of day unless there is an veritable revolution or *. political fundraising is deemed unconstitutional and it all goes public.** (Why is it that conflict of interest laws do not apply legislative action relative to candidate support and campaign contributions. Shouldn't all campaigns be publicly financed? This is, after all, suppose to be a democracy where we are all equal.) Oh well, all be it connected, this is another rant*..

Again thank you Virginia for moving this along!





Anthony Shostak:

Is there a social imperative for today's artists to engage with being "green"?

From Sara Pearson:

While educating people of all ages and persuasions is crucial—on the necessity to recycle, conserve gas and electricity, free the planet of dependency on oil and coal burning plants, and support research on soy-based plastics, clean energy, and the restoration of polluted land and water - there must be a fundamental shift of consciousness in individual and national psyches if any true change can be made.

In a consumer-based society where the answer is to buy more and own more without concern of the bigger circle of consequences (both internal and external), an alternative must be offered. In a country where the divides between class and race and religion and politics are encouraged to grow, an alternative must be offered. This alternative must be available, accessible, rewarding, and be introduced in surprising, unexpected, and satisfying ways.

While Matt Groening, Garry Trudeau, Prince Charles, and Bono can affect millions, artists working on smaller scales have the responsibility and capacity to affect major change as well. When scientists, artists, and teachers work together, right and left brains begin to integrate and perceive the world in a holistic vision. When outdoor sportsmen and mothers walking their children in strollers come across a site concert with dance artists performing an unnameable, mystifying, and utterly enchanting dance in the middle

of the pond they have fished in and walked around for years and is now completely transformed by this unknown thing that is neither animal, vegetable, nor mineral, yet perhaps all of the above, with a sound score that is nothing like any music they have heard before but is so lovely, they wonder if the piper has come into town. Suddenly they feel so alive, so curious, so calm and open and interested that there is nowhere they would rather be. And when it is over they realize they have been standing next to this stranger from the other side of the tracks with whom they have nothing in common, but somehow they start talking together and this hardness inside starts to soften. And when a referendum to rezone that area for new development comes up for a vote that fall, they pay attention this time and go to the polls.

And the mother listens to her children's pleas after seeing the concert and takes her son to that dance class and her daughter to that drumming class, and all of a sudden there is a new generation learning about competition-free communication, experiencing a paradigm where exploration and cooperation and respect and inspiration are nurtured in an exhilarating practice of democracy in action. And the next time the mother is exhausted, instead of opening a catalog that seduces her into taking out her credit card for yet another pair of designer jeans sewn by slave labor with cotton grown in toxic fields, she remembers that sound score she heard at the concert and how she



felt that night and decides on a whim to listen to that composer's music instead. And all of a sudden she is transported back to that land of wonder she discovered at the pond which is so expansive and present, and all of a sudden she realizes that that place is here, now, inside of her, and it is free and available anytime she exhales and remembers to remember. And instead of filling the emptiness with another trip to the mall, this group of teenagers volunteers to register people to vote, and that group of college students cancels their spring break plans to go to Fort Lauderdale and instead go to New Orleans for two weeks to rebuild houses.

This happens. We see it with each artistic community residency we conduct. We see it in projects organized by arts activists throughout the world - from Ahmedabad, India to Kyoto, Japan to Lewiston, Maine. Consciousness is being transformed, and people are realizing that they must look at the consequences of their action and inaction, and must open the circle of what they consider their "own" to include the entire world. This is the work. It is happening.

Every moment, every action, every word counts. As Hafiz reminds us, "What we speak becomes the house we live in."

photo by Virginia Valdes





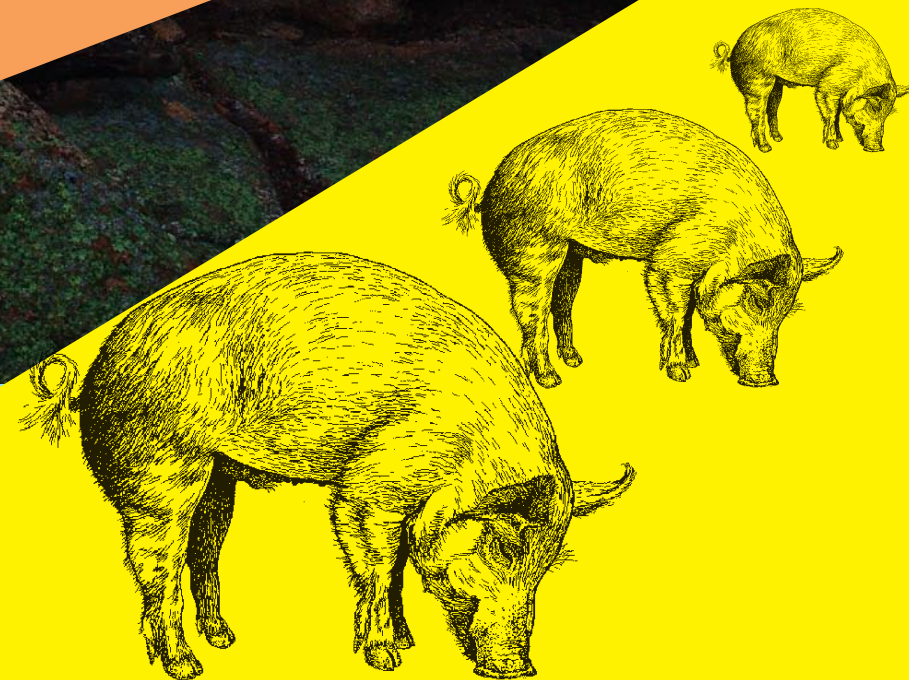
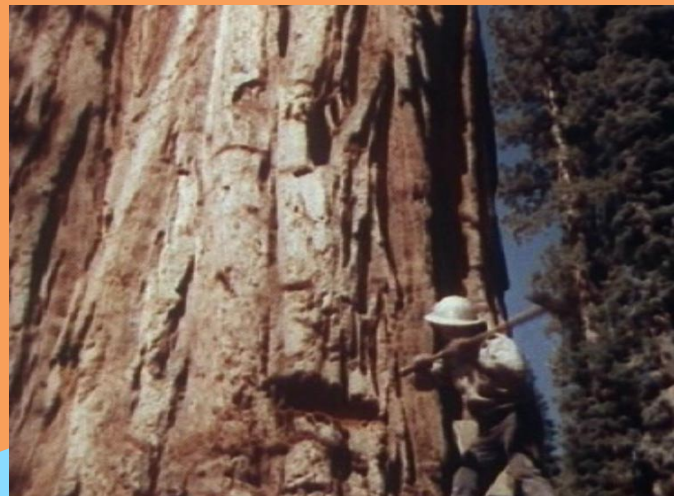
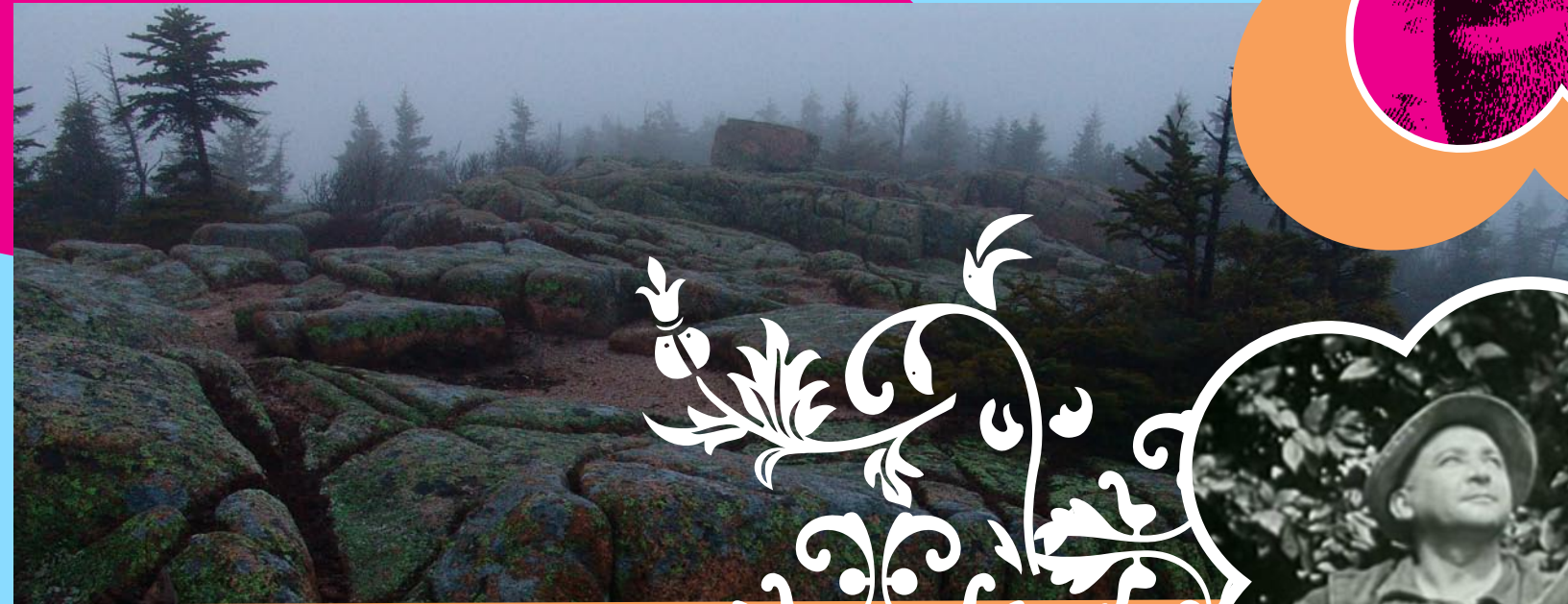
Anthony Shostak:

Is there a social imperative for today's artists to engage with being "green"?

From Beehive Design Collective:

As a collective, an important part of our work is to bridge the gap between art and political organizing. Our mission as artists and educators is to create work that conveys a compelling social and political message in a widely accessible format. We make an effort to bring creativity into the world of political and environmental activism, and bring political awareness into the Art world.

We believe it is imperative to connect the seemingly disparate issues of ecology and economy, and that environmental analysis is incomplete without connecting it to social justice and economic globalization. As well focusing on these issues within our art, we also think it is vital to understand and lessen the environmental footprint made by the production and distribution of our work.





FACULTY

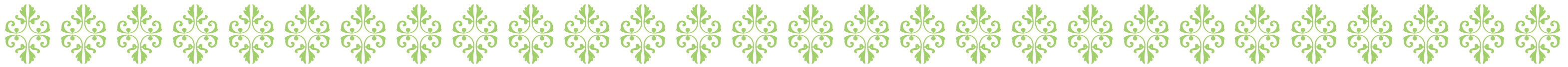
SYNERGY
GARDENERS

Synergy Grants





photo by Phyllis Graeber Jensen



Through a series of conversations, Museum staff and faculty determined that at the center of Green Horizons will be a number of collaborations between artists, students, faculty, and community members joining creative forces to produce original works of art. To this end, Faculty Project Support Grants for Green Horizons, funded through the Synergy Fund, supported the commission of new works of art made in part by cross-curricular investigation of the themes of the exhibition. The grants supported the creation or deepening of relationships within Bates and with local environmental and cultural organizations such as Lots-to-garden, Museum L/A, and the Stanton Bird Club.

David Scobey, Director of the Harvard Center for Community Partnerships and
Donald W. and Ann M. Harvard Professor of Community Partnerships,
and Christina Bechstein, artist, with Museum L/A.

Kimberly N. Ruffin, Professor of English,
Seitu Kenneth Jones, artist, and park ranger Bruce Barnes,
with Kristen Walter '00 and Lots-to-Gardens

Jonathan Skinner,
Assistant Professor of Environmental Studies and eco-poet,
and poet and visual artist Julie Patton, with Stanton Bird Club

Laura Faure, Bates Dance Festival Director,
with PearsonWidrig DanceTheater and composer Robert Een

Carol Dilley, Assistant Professor of Dance,
and Bill Matthews, Alice Swanson Esty Professor of Music,
with Bates-Morse Mountain Conservation Area

Student Synergy Grants
Jacob Bluestone '07, Molly Ladd '09 and Andrea Bisceglia '09,
Teagan McMahon '07







action 1: museum installation (the warp)

a small piece of woven space surrounded by the world re-purposed materials: thousands of shoe laces and wooden loom cloth beams from The Bates Mill Building #5

Stretching between floor 1 and 2 of the museum, a 30’warp of tied and knotted shoelaces hangs from hand-carved wooden beams on which cloth was once wound. All the material used was found in the once thriving Bates Mill. As both anchor and representation of the site in which we are working, the laces are for us the first warp weighted loom, the Lewiston map and a starting place (project beginning?). As the first stage of cloth making, the warp is unwound, as structure waiting to be woven into and added to.

action 2: community conversations (the weft)

materials: ourselves, borrowed digital recorder, aerial map of Lewiston, re-purposed creative workshop materials

As of the printing of this catalogue, we have been walking the hot urban streets of Lewiston, conversing and working individually and in workshops with children, youth, activists, and the elderly at Blake Street Towers, Meadowview Housing, Lots to Gardens Hot Tamales and Youth Crew groups and at Trinity Jubilee.

Together, we are aiming to create a space for collective imagining, reflecting, and creatively engaging each other. We are utilizing both oral and visual workshop methods, art making, utopian imagining, shared stories of creation and survival, language and listening. We ask: What kind of a planet do we want to co-create? How will we create it? How will we do this work together? What resources do we bring from our various histories? What is our relationship to the local? To the global? If we put the planet in Lewiston, how would we tell the story of this little place?

CHRISTINA BECHSTEIN

DAVID SCOBEEY

action 3: weaving the city (the cloth)

re-purposed materials: salvaged scrap material from Maine Heritage Weavers including salvaged warp ends and woven bedspread remnants, silkscreen ink made with turmeric and Lewiston earth Silk screened on woven bedspread remnants, sewn together and installed with warp ends, the city of Lewiston will be woven with temporary public art interventions along the river, mill canals and downtown streets. The printed voices of city residents will be woven into the warp of Lewiston itself, becoming part of the fabric of the city’s future. The interventions will catalyze public reflection, conversation, and creative action.

-Christina Bechstein

PROJECT TEAM:

Christina Bechstein Lead Artist

David Scobey Faculty Collaborator, Bates College & Co-Author

Michael Wilson Community Conversations Collaborator

ART ASSISTANTS:

Renee Castonguay, Jenna Crowder, Nina Petrouchka

COMMUNITY PARTNERS:

Rachel Desgrosseilliers, Executive Director, Museum L-A

Alyson Stone Executive Director, Empower Lewiston

ACTIONS

DAVID SCOBIEY

Social Fabric

For most of its life, Lewiston, Maine has been a city of weavers. The Great Falls anchored the mills, like the stones that weighted the warp threads of the first human looms. Water falling through space provided the first force with which a city of machinery, migrants, money, canals, streets, and buildings was drawn together.

Not just the cities of the Androscoggin: every place is full of weavers. Community-building itself is weaving: the action of many discrete filaments of energy, connection, ambition, negotiation, not tending in the same direction—not at all—but cutting across, under, over one another. The beauty of community, like fabric, lies in the play of differences: color, texture, directionality. The strength of community, like fabric, lies in its tensions and cross-purposes.

Microcosm

The social fabric draws strands and strength from beyond itself: from Quebec, Acadia, Michigan, Mogadishu. Particular threads may be broken or frayed. The fabric as a whole can absorb the fragility of thread. Lewiston’s loom-tenders learned how to tie up broken strands. Yet if those on the

fringes—newcomers, elders, the young, the poor—are not taken into the whole, their own lives can tear, rending the fabric.

We are constantly weaving, then. The making, rending, and tending of the social fabric looms large in the work of living together. Could that be why all societies have traditions of fabric-making? A woven thing takes in the social world that made it. Its filaments come from beyond the loom: materials that are spun, traditions that are taught, human relationships that are brought to bear on the work. The warp threadssong structuring strands, stretched taut on the loom, across which the weft is woven, can almost be seen as the matrix of community-building, threads of inheritance, history, the life that surrounds the fabric and grounds it. The woven thing is a microcosm: the wide world teased apart, stretched, spun, and threaded through it. And the woven thing in turn re-enters the wide world, a T-shirt, a bedspread, a canopy.

This installation, too, is a microcosm, unfinished work of the unfinished work of stories and journeys, a piece of woven space in woven space.

Urban Fabric

Poring over old maps, looking down on the mills from the Court Street hill, we may speak of the urban fabric. What do we mean? A weave of streets, buildings, parks. But also: a weave of human intersections, daily itineraries, relationships and avoidances. And also: a weave of histories, journeys across the planet through the Grand Trunk Depot, the Jetport, refugee camps in Kenya, summer camps in Wayne. The urban fabric is a map of memory and hope—a palimpsest of maps, layered with stories, strategies, tales of escape and arrival. Sometimes the social fabric is woven from plans and intentions. Sometimes it is woven from accidents and indirections. We veered into terra incognito and found ourselves.

Survival

British soldiers in the Second World War were issued survival maps, laminated, waterproof, charting the way from the battlefield to safety. Survival: literally, to live beyond. As local elders will tell you, “survivance” is the one of the root-words of Franco-American memory. Speak it and out pours a cascade of stories: Pépés near-starvation in Quebec; Papa coming home from the mill in winter, drenched in frozen sweat, ears filled with lint. *La survivance*: to live beyond mere need, to make a home, a union, a

pension, bedspreads for a living. To live beyond the border, walking into Kenya and the refugee camps, fleeing to Atlanta, flying to Portland.

We were born in many places; we were borne here. The urban fabric is a planetary palimpsest of survival maps, roots and routes, out of which a place is woven.

Place

A prayer rug; a bedspread. A small piece of woven space, surrounded by the world. The social fabric makes a place, a microcosm, coming together just here, here and not there, alongside these falls and empty mills, weaving the journeys and stories into a single, cross-purposed, self-taut place. Bates Mill. Bates College. L-A College. Kennedy Park. Great Falls.

Fringes

The fabric would unravel if it had no fringes. There, on the margins, the border where it lives beyond itself, feathering into the wide world, the integrity of the fabric is sustained. In Jewish tradition, the prayer shawl, the *tallit*, is adorned with four, precisely knotted corner fringes, or *tzitzit*. They remind us of what is beyond and lead us to it—a kind of survival map.

DAVID SCOBIEY

What does it mean that fringes are elaborated and adorned on the Muslim prayer rug, the Jewish prayer shawl, the Bates bedspread? What does it mean that the fringes of the social fabric are invisible and neglected?

Macrocosm

We are constantly weaving, then, partners in the work of creation. Moving across the earth with our maps and our stories, making a place on it, drawing together, at odds, against all odds. Everywhere is a microcosm. And this place, this city is a macrocosm too. Tied by invisible, neglected threads to Quebec, New York, cottonfields, killing fields, woven into the earth's huge, fragile fabric of life.

This cascade of threads, too, is a macrocosm, unfinished work of the unfinished work of weaving and being woven.

What shall we weave?

-David Scobey



A SMALL PIECE OF WOVEN SPACE SURROUNDED BY THE WORLD



Interview between curator Anthony Shostak, and artist Christina Bechstein

AS: How does Social Fabric fit into your evolving oeuvre?

My practice as an artist is focused on placing myself within the landscape, interface with it and the people that inhabit it in order to share or illuminate a reality, much like a landscape painter would, but I actually physically ENTER the picture or place—as laborer, learner, facilitator, maker ..., and work from that place as a focal point.

I'm usually working with others and not in isolation. My projects usually last for many years, and Social Fabric is no different! I've not only formed relationships that I want to continue, but after 1 year the meat of our project is just revealing itself. I see this project as either an interactive web site celebrating the community or a future public art proposal for Lewiston.

I truly believe that framing thoughtful action in the work under the umbrella of creative work provides room for the seeing, sensing, tenderness and possibility - I want my creative work to matter for the world. I had a great teacher, Gerhardt Knodel who would often ask – What lineage will you leave behind as an artist? I take this question very seriously.

In my teaching, I utilize service and experiential learning in the classroom where art students are learning & practicing as artists and co-creators in community settings. I also stress what I call the WHAT IF. We begin by brain storming - dreaming up and imagining our collective fantasies and wishes, listing them out and then choose one and tackle it—utilizing skills from the world of project planning to put those wishes into action. My teaching and research dovetails with my own practice and they reinforce one another.

AS: What are some of your previous works?

I love being able to use the frame of “artmaking” to push the boundaries of what is possible. – Can my work as an artist can be beautiful, activist, transformative and useful all at the same time?

For instance, in Mending, an ongoing project, I'm learning how to mend fishing nets from Maine fisherman. The project is performative, it is collaborative (I'm being taught by fisherman), it is sculptural (there is product), it is historical documentation (filming and recording the teaching) – who knows where it will go next.

In Floating Farms, I'm working with the late playwright Pamela Mills and three farm landscapes—California, Indiana and South Africa. This is a seven-year project which I'm hoping to conclude in the next few years tackles disappearing resources, our immortality, and the cataclysmic beauty of what it means to live as humans on this earth.

AS: How did you go about creating the work?

First of all I have an amazing co-author for this project, David Scobey, who is Director of Bates Harvard Center, not to mention a Cultural Historian and national leader in the area of Civic Engagement and Service Learning. David and I met a lot and talked and shared listened and debated and shared some more. David assisted me in finding language for something I've been trying to articulate for years. He also was a true partner in the making of this work, keeping the project on its toes while having total faith in my work as an artist.

Then I have this incredible team in addition to David—Michael Wilson, a Bates alumnus, has been my right hand in the community work. Renee Castonguay, a young printmaker has been the dye maker extraordinaire. Jenna Crowder, Nina Petrouchka, and David Siegfried have labored so thoughtfully.

And then our community partners – Rachel and Alyson, these women inspire me beyond belief, they are true visionaries in our midst. And then the residents we've worked with, I could go on and on bragging about each individual.

I read a lot prior to this project, both acts of radical activism to care for human beings and the planet AND about the crappy state of destruction we've caused and continue to cause. Personally, I faced a lot of demons this topic: what will the planet be like in the future and what do I and we have to do with it? The more I

CHRISTINA BECHSTEIN

read I realized the gravity of the situation and our collective denial of what is going on. This is a serious business, no doubt about it.

The bottom line for me has become how can we possibly live better as human beings – can we take care of each other and the planet? I’ve come to think that we need an ethic of caring for everything and realizing it is all interconnected:, the soil in our front yard, the person behind the cashier, those suffering in the margins, our enemies. How will mankind survive extinction and stop the senseless destruction of this gift we’ve been given, the earth? Together, it’s the only way. So I didn’t work alone for this exhibit. I went out into the community and grew our project team while growing the content and outcome of the project.

We are stretching what is possible with this project—both in the form, the scale and in the questions we are asking of community. For instance, What kind of a community do we want to create together? What kind of a world? These are huge questions to grapple with not only for my team as artists but for us as humans. Mike Wilson, who worked with us intensely on this project and I literally laid everything out on a wall and struggled with the question: What does it take to image the future? How do we do it? How can we talk about it? The answer for me found itself in the fact that we do it be just talking about it AND through witness and taking part in acts of creative transformation—baking, planting seeds, making art, witnessing and sharing creation together.

AS: How did you approach surmounting problems in creating the work?

Man, the toughest but also most rewarding part was asking of other human beings, and myself, to imagine a better planet. This has stretched my every cell.

Did being part of Green Horizons cause any shifts in how you approach new works, or in studio practice, or lifestyle intended to foster sustainability (environmental, community, economics, etc.)?

In a huge way. Completely entering this topic in one’s thinking and work and going through it means coming out altered. Collaborating with non-visual artists, as part of the lead project team, is something I will continue to seek out. The working team of Social Fabric has become a fabric – an interconnected group of individual who are adding to and informing the project.

The Lewiston residents have not only forced me to be my realest, most vulnerable self. But they have inspired me to believe in groundswell of those taking action in our communities, all over the planet, to make this world a better place.

The project has led me to a whole new process of utilizing conversation as an art material. Conversation, words between myself and others becomes a new creative art material– filled with transformative possibility, beauty, seeing, sadness, something to save for others to experience and reflect on.

We’ve talked about how the local relates to the global, the planet we inhabit and our role in influencing what life is like on it.

From my notes from community:

We have to work together, not in isolation.

We need to be able to confront conflict.

We need our connections.

We need to learn to listen to one another.

We need to acknowledge the struggles of our neighbors.

We need to use soft eyes when dealing with people who are tough for us to deal with.

We need to pay attention to our own growing edges.

It is good to grow food, harvest and eat it together.

We need green things in our cities.

Children and elders need to form connections.

This local community is a global one and this community is like so many others.

If we can do it here we can do it everywhere.

We can get there.

This morning I made my bed with my new Bates Mill Bedspread. It was woven at Maine Heritage Weavers, a small local mill that still runs in the enormous empty mills here is Lewiston. I cherish this pink and white woven cloth that covers the place where I sleep, something locally created by hands of residents here, the site of my current project.



photo by Virginia Valdes

CHRISTINA BECHSTEIN

As of the printing of this catalogue, my project assistant Mike Wilson and myself have been walking the hot urban streets of Lewiston, recording conversations with residents about a rich and ideal future they can imagine co-creating here locally in Lewiston. In many ways this is the hardest work I've ever done. —And the most hopeful.

I really wanted to get to something real and perhaps affirming, I felt a need to find my own sense of hope for humanity with this project, I needed to know there was a way for us to do a better job of living on this planet and living together.

We need to believe that we can make a difference and we need access to the tools and to one another to make that difference. How will we survive? Collaboration, caring, not giving up ...

INTERVIEW

Julie Patton

JULIE PATTON

Jonathan Skinner

JONATHAN
SKINNER



SUSTAIN ABILITY



JULIE PATTON

Opal Lessons: Note 1.*(For my Father, Cleve W. Patton, August 7, 1926-July 16, 2007)*

Papa's got a brand new bag (paper or plastic
time in a bottle, flood insurance, "take it to the bridge" over troubled waters miss a sip
and...Katrina! 60% port consumed pre cyclone time warp

w raps *sustain*...
in

ability to [re]move "past" "present" stains
beyond the *pale*

bleach (chlorine/dioxin) pile
books nature preserves zoo cemetery Disney World aquarium "future" *remainders*

sort of

catalogue *reminders*
Out!

Source memory, wear and tear, loss and gain *re*
Presentation

As basic form *will*
to power takes

Over
Cast skies, flood of books (some arched as rooftops
of bird houses or birds

w *ing* potential a
dove...

and below *time lines* (as in "gimme a line"
uproot

ing primordial **Treacher* of
no ledge, from floor

wrest
a *mount* to shorn covenant (between man and
"nature") re

mArk s peak
reign in a riptide of paper ridden turbulence
See wall.

Fill in the blank

O



photo: by Virginia Valdes

SUSTAIN ABILITY

JULIE PATTON

Pals of Opal
Whiteley can’t *ink* in the same vein?

Paper roosts and wood words *spell*

will *low* enough to listen
field for rest or trees if *m Ills*, *mine s* (possession)

halve their way. *Buzz*, *buzz*. *Saw*, *saw*. Pages
two by two (I *know a*
lot about Opal logging

scraps of bags, wrapping:

bark
hark
park
dark

Nests, *tail tales* re
Cycled seasons in a holler log
for safekeeping

even though worms may destroy my body, our body

Sustain...a meditation on death and dying
Things, impermanence, solutions

The Conservation pamphlet for water
gardens suggest keeping a hollow log for animals

shelter

Opal room
stretching to stay body. *Probe Limb. Sustain*
novel forms of book making be keeping beaks, *treepen*

Upon a time,

Someone mentioned “extinction”
Might be animal spirits “crossing over” light transcend
dance, writing

space un

Herd of, *re*
leaved departure, passenger pigeon silence, *Martha*
Know a

Word for loss, gain

“E, I, E, I, O!”

voweling over human re
mains:

“Yum, yum, eat em up!”

The Cow rained in, primers
“hoofing it”
Mu (*m Eat* me later as

Opal pidgin
English sooty little rascal, shows business
“The pleasure of the door”

“wild” “things”
For rest of Opal the
“good” book say

*“The ants are a people not strong, yet they prepare their food in summer;
The rock badgers are a feeble folk, yet they make their homes in the crags;*

*The locusts have no kings, yet they advance in ranks,
The spider skillfully grasps with its hands and it is in kings’ palaces”*

—Proverbs 30:24

Room for all. Proses. Shelf tired. Stack blown
Come post
Architecture. Frameless Florist cathedral. Leap logs. Ark a text
in
cycles *pedia*

London
India
dyeing th *ink!*
Or a goner

Indian

Schizophrenic
Animal
Shamanal
Nameinall
Queer
Out of the mouths of babes
Incoherent
Primitive
Inarticulate
Birdbrain
Mumbo Jumbo
Child sing
Gibberish
Ill literate



JULIE PATTON

(mIll litter, rape

Wood’n
Imaginations
Race Blake *against* time, gang
Stares, gun store

*“to err is human
for give divine”*

Rights =Writes
Wrong Rites

a “taint” shush... saint.
dead languishes?
Not that ant’s *ain’t* and bees *not our business*, busy nest s peak
handland Leave us
 Paper
 Leaves

“Houses round...like the nest of birds” (Black Elk Opal Whitelay lines heathen heaven

Chicken little

Skies

Fall, leave

V v V v V
Book on back
*Arch a ch...urch, a text
sure of leaves*
Mounted animals
(on the brink)
bird brains
hogwash
Bleached skins
Die ox
Skin birds
3/5 humans
“quack”
lieburied
tree of no ledge
illegal immigrants
Riff-raff
Gibberish
Tweet-tweet
Gobblety-gook geek
Primitive
Moo
Oink
Batty
Retarded
Non sense
Monkey-talk



Indians
Ratty
Bearish
Growling
Squawk

Trash. Talk.
So many

>>>>>>>> to cross

^ ^
^^^ ^^ ^^^
^ ^ ^ ^

At last.

Kangaroo Court. *Opal tried*
and committed.

Boo-boo
ca-ca

Dodo birds
1
1

l
l
V

Let airs
Living leaving cleaving
Daedelus
(Dad!
Pa
per
son
us
sun
flower

a wing & a prayer

Jonathan living...

Stone
tree
Be balm

circus ring to it
zoo, too
b arkquarium
bee



JULIE PATTON

pest control

children unheard
be lie
buried die *note sore or sour*
Saber-toothed
shut-up
shoot like flowers
viva
loco

Paper airplane-----⑧

Bird feet Y
(turned sideways

Die no more
All
uvial

angel
non-avian
hell
Bird on a wire
stuff
to die for

a sou, a soul, soil,
sel, sal, sol, sole, s Oil

First “God” then
man
animals
nominal
humanimals
manymalls
implants
insectular
rocks
*crag*s
no thing a
mount

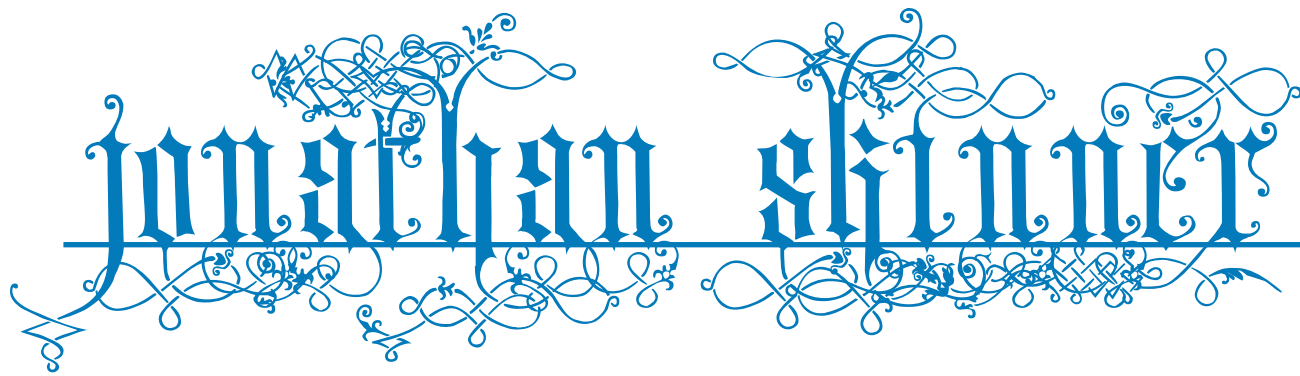
O, pal time
Sweet equalizer
In time
Lines
All!

“Assuredly, *I say to you, inasmuch as you did it to one of the least of my brethren, you did it to me.*”
—Matthew 25:40



ROTHMAN
FACULTY SYNERGY GRANTS

ROTHMAN



A Room for Opal, Room for Time: Listening with Julie Patton

A *Room for Opal* emerged in collaboration with poet and artist Julie Patton and our work together around *ecopoetics*, a journal I edit devoted to creative-critical edges between making (with an emphasis on poetry) and ecology, what I call the praxis of deliberate earthlings. What does it mean to live deliberately, in relation to all the others (human as well as other-than-human)? And what can possibly be the oldest form of making—going to the root sense of “poetry,” as essentially a species of making—bring to this conversation?

Ecopoetics was founded with these questions in mind, and one of the first submissions I received was Julie’s piece, “Slug Art”: a leaf perforated by a slug’s digestive juices, and a poem singing through the various ramifications of the word “slug,” from invertebrate, to bullet, to typesetting element. The playfulness of Julie’s work crossed received categories between “nature” and “culture,” between “art” and “nature,”

between “human” and “invertebrate,” raising the question: what would an art created in the spaces between species look like?

Why, in a time when we desperately need to recalibrate our relations to the rest of the planet, do so many of the contemporary artists and writers attending to the crisis (thankfully enough) continue to posit a human “subject” here, a “nature” over there, reinstating the very dualism structuring our inability to relate? If art is a form of knowledge, it equals scientific cognition not by emulating scientific method but by methods intrinsic to its own love of paradox and open-ended form. Art allows us to think the unthinkable, say what cannot be said, and move around, inside and outside of the “rational” box. Art teaches us what science cannot. If slugs make art, it is human artists, rather than scientists, who will be their collaborators and critics.

That said, we owe to scientists the diagnosis of crisis, a measuring of affairs that translates into the language of power, and attention to the things that really matter to slugs, and all other subjects of the

taxonomic kingdoms—attention that, when ethically directed, can make scientists collaborators too. Art could do what science cannot by listening to science rather than ignoring it. Science could do what art cannot by listening to art, not ignoring it. Julie’s work has taught me a great deal about listening: a seeing-hearing that begins with the letters and syllables we make our words of, extending to the forms of seeds, leaves and plants, the shapes of human and animal vocalizations, the curves a musical note writes on our nerves. Art can provide more than raw data for scientific method, science more than “facts” for artistic interpretation. Both are human activities positioned in a world desperately in need of our hearing, of both one another, and of those other-than-humans we have yet to invent (or remember) a mode of listening to.

Patton’s book works, “paper toys,” concrete poetics, “composaytions,” floor plays, “recycle pedias,” and “vociflors,” amongst other performance and publication modes, extend the modernist “revolution of the word” into collaborative civic and natural spaces. Her daily site-specific installations of book and plant assemblages at Casa Malaparte in Capri, Italy (1995) or her floor installation with books at Stadtbucherei Ludenscheid in Ludenscheid, Germany

(1997) exemplify her use of the book as magical object and architectural medium, interacting with natural materials. Language takes place in letters and breath, inscribed on paper pulped from plant materials, scrolled, accorded or bound into books whose shapes, page layout and spatial forms are governed as much by principles of architecture as by those of literary composition. (In the case of her collaborations with Euphrosyne Bloom, from 1991 to 2001, the medium is film.) At the same time, these constructions are susceptible to “contamination” by the wild forms of flowers, branches and other plant elements, a form of “spelling” that helps turn them into instruments of magic.

Patton’s practice as a gardener and forager, whether for subsistence or pleasure, has been as much a part of her work as her constructions and performances. More recently, her efforts have taken a civic turn, with the 1387 Corporation artists’ cooperative, in Cleveland, Ohio (of which Patton is President), with her leadership and collaboration with City Planning officials and neighborhood youth around a re-design of bicycle pathways in the Cleveland parks, and with her works engaging civic trauma, such as the “Common Ground” memorial tree planting project and performance with local artists and community activ-

ists in Winston-Salem, North Carolina (2005). As a performer, Patton tours Europe regularly with composer Uri Caine, writing and improvising librettos for his eclectic “operas.” Her performances sometimes take the form of “improvoications,” where improvisation and voice conspire to provoke reflection around the submerged presence of race in politics or avant-garde practice, as in her impersonation of Colin Powell as Othello for Caine’s “Othello Syndrome,” at La Biennale di Venezia della Musica (2003). In what she calls “Ju-Ju Pulp-its & Con Texts (where the body gets close to the hand turning the pages of the self as a paper doll),” Patton deploys the language of dance and mime alongside “paper toys” and “life-sized” letters, recalling the public modes of *commedia dell’arte* or marionette theater (see “play / sub mitted by/ “X,”” a “Soap Opera” documented in *Tripwire* #5, 2001).

In writing, Patton extends her work outside the identity politics that have configured and constrained so much postmodern African American art and poetry, with, amongst other projects, *Alphabet Soup*, an extended series on the alphabet, exploring and exploding a wild range of resonances, letter by letter: as in the existential, ontological riff on the “middle passage” of B, in *Teething on Type*: 2. (One of my

favorite pieces is “Oxford Re-Verse,” where Patton locates “black American” speech in lines from early English literature.) See volumes such as *Teething on Type*, *Not So Bella Donna*, *But A Deadly Nightshade!*, *Notes for Some (Nominally) Awake*, or anthologies such as *The Portable Boog Reader*, or *Moving Borders: Three Decades of Innovative Work by Women*. Patton’s work brings much to the site of ecopoetics, in its fearless embrace of the indeterminate spaces between disciplines, its cultivation of an edge practice rather than exploitation of a professional niche, its commitment to diversity, and its willingness to inhabit parallel, even juxtaposed, dimensions—without demanding they drive into and reinforce one another on the same plane. Patton lets art, as a form of knowledge cultivated through the investigation of materials, make a difference, by placing art’s investigations in social fields where the response is indeterminate, not random. Her work is responsive, and radically responsible to the contexts in which it takes place: while she draws on a particular repertory of forms, vocabularies, gestures and vocalizations honed through years of practice, these are not marshaled to reproduce a portable concept. Rather, each work is time, place and community-specific, in a configuration determined through what the available materials make (unpredictably) available.

When Bates Museum Director Mark Bessire and Curator Anthony Shostak suggested I apply for a Synergy Grant, for potential participation in the Green Horizons Exhibit, and told me the grant would be for collaboration between a faculty member, a visiting artist and a community organization, I thus immediately thought of Julie’s work. I also thought of the Thorncrag Bird Sanctuary (which the Stanton Bird Club administers), and the Morse Mountain Conservation Area (managed jointly by Bates College and the St. John family): sites miraculously dedicated to the well-being of other-than-human species, and to the widest possible sense of conversation. Julie and I had often traded tales of encounters with owls and other wild spirits, and I wanted to see what the Maine woods could bring to the conversation, what we could offer. An additional notion was that Julie, as part of her residency at Bates, would help me teach a week of the May 2007 Short Term course in Ecopoetics: we would work onsite, with students, in collaboration with volunteers from the Lewiston-Auburn community, in an effort that would contribute to the Green Horizons installation. When we were fortunate enough to receive the grant, Julie immediately told me she’d like the students to read the “Mystical Nature Diary” of Opal Whiteley, *The Singing Creek Where the Willows Grow*. Thus was planted the seed that would become *A Room for Opal*.

Opal Whiteley was a young, very small but very precocious nature writer who published a best-selling diary in 1920. It soon went out of print, however, and Whiteley into obscurity, due to growing skepticism that she had actually written the diary. She claimed to have written it from 1904 to 1905, living with her family and attending school in Walden, a logging community in Oregon’s Willamette Valley. As her editor Benjamin Hoff narrates, “There, in the latter half of her sixth year, Opal began to write a diary, which she kept in a hollow log in the nearby forest. In it she described her home, her animal friends, her cathedral area among the trees, and ‘the singing creek where the willows grow.’ Using her own phonetic form of spelling, she printed with crayons on pieces of scrap paper a neighbor woman brought her. The crayons were left for her in a secret place in the woods, where she would leave notes asking the fairies for more ‘color pencils’ to write with” (*The Singing Creek Where the Willows Grow: The Mystical Nature Diary of Opal Whiteley*, ed. Benjamin Hoff, Penguin: NY, 1994). Opal’s ambition was to write books for children about the inhabitants of the field and forest; indeed, she soon gained a reputation as a “teacher of the forest and its ways,” and would take logging-camp children on “explores” to her cathedral in the forest to listen to the singing of the birds.

A ROOM FOR OPAL

JONATHAN SKINNER

She would later finance her university education and the printing of her first book, *The Fairyland Around Us* (1919), by giving widely attended talks.

Opal sings to plants, puts her ear close to the rock and listens to the “lichen folk” who “talk in gray tones,” imagines stretching out long and getting short again like an earth worm, and observes her toad friend Lucian Horace Ovid Virgil “use his hands to stuff [a worm] down his throat.” The prose, incredible for a six year-old, is written in an approximation of French syntax, and seasoned with French words and names: “I did sing to the rivière a song. I sang it *le chant de Seine, de Havre et Essonne et Nonette et Roullon et Iton et Darnetal et Ourcq et Rille et Loing et Eure et Audelle et Nonette et Sarc.*” In it, she goes on explores: “I like to go in among the rushes where the black birds with red upon their wings do go. I like to touch fingertips with the rushes. I like to listen to the voices that whisper in the swamp.”

A further biographical complication (and marvel) is that Opal Whiteley did not consider herself to be Opal Whiteley but, rather, Françoise, daughter to the Princess Marie and naturalist Henri d’Orléans, a prince of the French royal family of Bourbon. (Henri had died when Opal was four, at the end of an expe-

dition through India and Indochina.) These were her Angel Mother and Father, who used to take her on walks and teach her to observe what was around her. Such beliefs earned her the increasing skepticism of her fellow humans, and a perilously marginal place in society. After ten months in India, where Opal lived in the maharana of Udaipur’s guest house, and time in an imperial convent in Vienna, she lived in London as a ward of the city. “During the second world war,” Hoff notes, “she was often seen scavenging for books in the rubble of bombed buildings.” Opal was committed in 1948 to Napsbury Hospital, outside London, where she would die in 1992 at the age of 95. Thus she takes her place beside writers like John Clare or Antonin Artaud (amongst others), “schizophrenic” poets who were punished by society for making public their visions and hearings.

In our dialogue, printed in another part of this catalog, Julie and I discussed sustainability, or, rather, our reluctance to use the word, a term meant to designate (according to the World Commission on Environment and Development) “meeting the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs.” If sustainability is about generational self-reliance, it is largely about time, about how the energy crisis entails a cri-

sis in our relationship to time. “Email bankruptcy” is a collective call for TIME OUT. How can we stop speeding and make time, to listen beyond the needs of our own generation, to “have feels” for the times of others? How can we make the time it takes to know a landscape, for instance, not just across seasons, but across years and decades—by listening at the overlap between generational horizons, at the stone walls of successional New England plots. Instead of sustainability, we discussed walking, we have always discussed walking, while walking, or in Paul Klee’s words, while “taking a line for a walk.”

We decided that with intergenerational walks through Thorncrag we would draw a timeline, by ear and by foot, across multiple horizons, including that of the retreat of the Laurentian Ice Sheet and that of the Great Flood, right down to the current shrinking of the polar ice caps and the inundation of coastal cities. The timeline would also focus on extinctions and recoveries, as in the recent, uncertain appearances of the Lord God Bird. Susan Hayward helped us locate elders and children who were generous enough to walk with us at Thorncrag. (Rain cancelled the walk outdoors with Susan’s Junior Naturalists, which led instead to an enchanted game of “Simon Says,” exploring Thorncrag indoors at the

Montello School.) Key collaborators in all of this were my “students”—a designation put in quotation marks, since they had so much to teach. And a key context was our meeting outside to read, discuss and write, amidst the singing birds and sprouting leaves, nearly every day for three weeks before Julie arrived. As a culmination of these meetings (but only one of several projects), each student wrote, printed, designed and constructed a book that found its way into the installation. There also was a performance at Bates College, Julie conducting music professor Dale Chapman, myself and the students, in a live “composaytion.” The recording included on the DVD catalog opens with two excerpts from that performance.

I collected recordings of our “composaytions” and conversations, for listening stations located in four of the bird houses: at one you hear the collaborative performance, at one the conversation with elders at Thorncrag, at one the conversation with children at the Montello School, and at one (the eponymous Bird House), a mix of Charlie Parker and Peterson’s *Guide to Eastern/ Central Bird Song*. The bird houses, along with Noah’s Ark, are “roofed” by the books of poetry composed at Thorncrag, and at various other sites (some urban) along the Androscoggin and

Kennebec watersheds. For those who cannot kneel, a listening station shuffling segments of the various recordings is located at Opal's desk.

Opal's desk, amongst other things, indicates the Enlightenment classroom, with its alphabet blocks and birds' nests, an enchanted place in its own right, where natural history and childhood wonder are mutually illuminated. It is also, surely, a site of discipline and constraint: the hold of a society that has made us such poor listeners. (Opal often depicts herself being abused by non-comprehending adults.) The implication is that such deafness threatens the very life of the thing that is not being heard: an indictment the timeline of extinctions on the wall makes vivid, in place of the alphabet train. In a kind of parody of Opal's punishment for the truancy of her explores, an open book invites visitors to write out ecological resolutions, of their own devising, such as "I will not leave the water running while I brush my teeth."

To get things started, Julie's mother, Virgie Patton, wrote out several of these resolutions. Virgie, a painter herself, was also a key participant in the installation, making the collaboration very personal as well as intergenerational. In fact, the entire

"hanging" atmosphere, with many of the artists (and friends and family) present at the same time working on their installations, was a vital aspect of this exhibit, a continuation of dialogue initiated during an artist's gathering the curators had organized earlier in the year. Such collaboration, like the listenings that led us to *A Room for Opal*, is provisional, and can only model the conversations that must make up the very fabric of our days, before we can even begin to talk meaningfully about sustainability. We have a choice, to sustain our professional differences: "work," "art," "science," "poetry," "literature" (not to speak of "church," "government"), or to listen across the differences, to begin to find out what it is we want to sustain. We find ourselves at a crossroads, where Opal's timeline spills into the chaotic and indefinite future.

In this uncomfortable place, books kept Opal company: Hoff tells us that when she was committed she was found living in a flat "filled from floor to ceiling with wooden boxes holding an estimated total of ten to fifteen thousand books, many of which were said to contain underlined passages and notes in Opal's handwriting." Perhaps because they have long been powerful models for conversations that write lines across time, books are the medium in which Pat-

ton has chosen to sculpt her Room for Opal. They serve as pedestals for bird houses and various found objects, taking flight, casting their profiles on the time line. Their colors and textures make the piece as tactile as it is visual. Some are treasures from Patton's own library, most, many ex-library copies, were found amidst the "rubble" at the local Salvation Army. The eerily pointed "talk" of the various titles and cover matter lends voice to the precarious, architectural forms.

One need not labor the visual puns between book and wing, book and house, book and mill—so many responses to the rich history, environment and town of Lewiston, Maine. Nor could one begin to enumerate, to describe the various historical and political vectors embedded in the imagery of Patton's wondrous, often sharp, often humorous assemblage. It is like a wild, overgrown Joseph Cornell Box, still showing the vocabulary of its minimalist sensibility. Through Julie Patton, Opal invites us into her room for "explores," to stay for more than a few minutes, to "look looks down upon the mill town," and then to get small, on one's knees, and begin to listen. As if to say, that it is only by making ourselves small that we can begin.

-Jonathan Skinner

SEITU KENNETH JONES

STATEMENT

My collard green installation is a collaboration between myself, Kim Ruffin, Assistant Professor of English at Bates College, and Bruce Barnes, New Orleans musician and National Park Service Ranger.

I've grown Collard Greens for twelve years. The collard green (*brassica oleracea acephalo*) originated in Europe, probably in the Mediterranean. The Greek and Roman armies would eat vast quantities of collards before battle. The English used collards as a primary winter vegetable for centuries. In France it is known as the cow cabbage, because, in France and other parts of Europe it was used as a fodder crop and fed to cattle. Collard greens were eaten in parts of Africa before slavery and are still grown and prepared there today. Collard greens are now identified as a staple of southern US cooking, particularly associated with African American cuisine (soul food). While closely linked to southern cuisine, collards are grown throughout the United States.

When I began my investigation into collard greens, they were a metaphor for African-American culture. As I became involved with planning and planting community gardens in my neighborhood in St. Paul, I began to use collard greens as a method to focus attention to local food security issues. Collards became a way to praise, promote and plant a familiar culturally specific vegetable to demonstrate the ease of growing food and solving some food security issues.

The Collard plant installation at Bates uses cardboard recycled from appliance boxes and low volatile organic compound latex paints from the Bates Building and Grounds department.

There are over 75 collard plants that were planted in the traffic circle outside of the Bates College Museum, by museum staff and staff and volunteers from Lots-to-Gardens a garden advocacy group, based in Lewiston, ME. The harvested plants will go into the Bates College food service program and to Lots-to-Gardens for distribution.

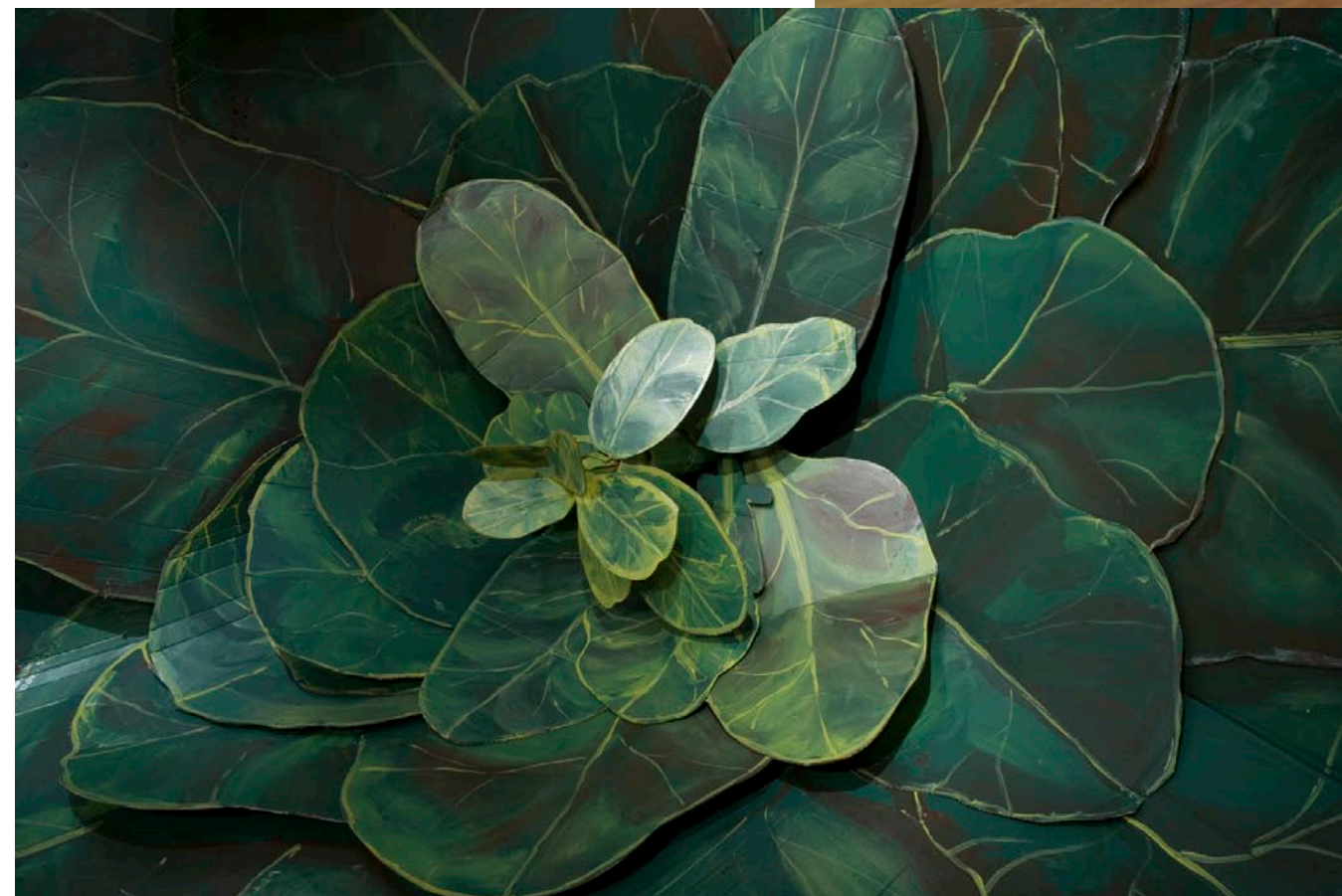
- Seitu Jones

SEITU KENNETH JONES

KIMBERLY RUFFIN

BRUCE "SUNPIE" BARNES

Photo by Seitu Jones



COLLARDS



Photo by Jon L. ...
Courtesy of ...

SEITU KENNETH JONES

KIMBERLY RUFFIN

BRUCE "SUNPIE" BARNES



Photo by Elizabeth S. Mitchell '09

KIMBERLY RUFFIN

Battered by Katrina, **the cradle of America's artistic identity** might never recover its vitality... Crisis of culture in New Orleans

-- Front page headline from *Chicago Tribune* (bolding added to original)

Black people continue to lose their arm of legacy - land. We are losing farm land in record amounts, and as we lose the land - we lose assets and collateral for future generations. In some parts of the United States, it's business as usual. Intimidation, land and property theft, politically motivated eminent domain land seizures, even lynching still goes on. Black people continue to die in parts of the South in land disputes.

-- Black Farmers & Agriculturalists Association

As an African-American and an African-Americanist, my thinking about sustainability has been driven by the effort to sustain the brilliant legacies of two distinct environmental experiences: the rural farm and New Orleans. We are indeed a people of the rural "woods" and urban "(neighbor) hoods." Cultures are living things open to change and transformation; however, human beings also work to sustain elements of their culture they deem vital. The rural legacy offers an intimate knowledge of the land and experience as "producers." The endangered legacy of what was once called America's "most African city" holds artistic practices heralded around the world and traditions of community engagement and collective art-making which sustained people throughout economic and social marginalization.

In both these rural and urban traditions, I see humans as part of nature. The large-scale ecological devastation and displacement in the Gulf Coast region in the catastrophic aftermath of Hurricanes Katrina and Rita demonstrates the intertwined nature of human and non-human ecological concerns. As the site of endangered ecosystems and concentrated "environmental injustice," New Orleans represents the urgency in understanding both non-human nature and human cultures as worthy subjects of

dialogue and action about sustainability. It also exemplifies the immense contribution to cultural biodiversity offered to the world by people of African descent in the United States of America.

Portions of the environmentalist movement vilify humans, seeing them only as the prime environmental enemy. This not only ignores the fact that human beings are "natural" but also that human hierarchies and systems result in unequal experiences of the "natural" world. Sighting and Sounding Sustainability gave me the opportunity to collaborate with others and explore "sustainability" rooted in a space that melds rural and metropolitan legacies, human and non-human nature: the urban community garden.

Along with me, the principle collaborators included: Bruce Barnes (National Park Service, Ranger; professional musician and leader of musical group Sunpie and the Louisiana Sunspots), Seitu Kenneth Jones (professional visual artist and Master Gardener), and Bridgette Bartlett (Education and Outreach Coordinator of local community group

Lots-to-Gardens). We divided our project into two parts: **Sighting and Sounding Sustainability** (located inside and outside the Bates College Museum of Art) and **Sighting and Sounding Sustainability: Gardeners-to-Artists** (located in the community and the garden). "People and Plants" emerged as a theme which would link the two project parts. In addition, we sought ways to combine indoor and outdoor elements for both parts of the project.

Sighting and Sounding Sustainability

Here we chose to create a multimedia installation rendering a group relationship to a particular plant. African-Americans and the collard green were chosen. We wanted to reflect the past and present of this relationship. To reflect the historical depth of this relationship, text from the Federal Writers' Project Former Slave Narratives was included on leaf edges of a large scale collard green designed and painted by Seitu Jones. Bill Low secured the recycled cardboard and cast-off paint which was used to create the collard greens. Here are the historical voices included in the project (I was honored that

SIGHTING AND SOUNDING SUSTAINABILITY

KIMBERLY RUFFIN

Seitu was able to include the experience of my great-great-granduncle, George Womble, in his visual representation.):

Collard leaves we put on head for misery and again we made a poultice with them for boils... Once I when I had a carbuncle on the back of my neck, and they said I was goin' to die, I cured myself with it.

- Warner Willis, enslaved in Louisiana

Some of the times he did not have enough food to eat and so when the time came to feed the cows he took a part of their food (a mixture of cotton seed, collard stalks, and small ears of corn) and ate it when it night came.

- interviewer record of George Womble, enslaved in Georgia

Wet collard leaf tied on an aching head or skin sore will run de pain off...

-Vinnie Brunson, enslaved in Texas

Collard greens met the needs of these enslaved African-Americans suffering from hunger and inadequate medical care. In the present day, collard greens (and other varieties of greens such as mustard, turnip, and kale) remain popular in African-American communities. Bruce Barnes speaks to the medicinal, cultural, and nutritional place of collard greens in contemporary African-America in his song, "Country Greens," commissioned for this installation.

The outdoor portion of the exhibit was designed by Seitu Jones and executed by Anthony Shostak, Bill Low, Bridgette Bartlett, and Ari Rosenberg. After the ground was prepared, several collard green seedlings were planted in the traffic circle in front of the museum. When they mature in the fall, they may serve as ingredients in a "Collard Green Cook-Off," an event which will give local examples of this unfolding "people and plant" relationship.



photo by Elizabeth S. Mitchell '09

KIMBERLY RUFFIN

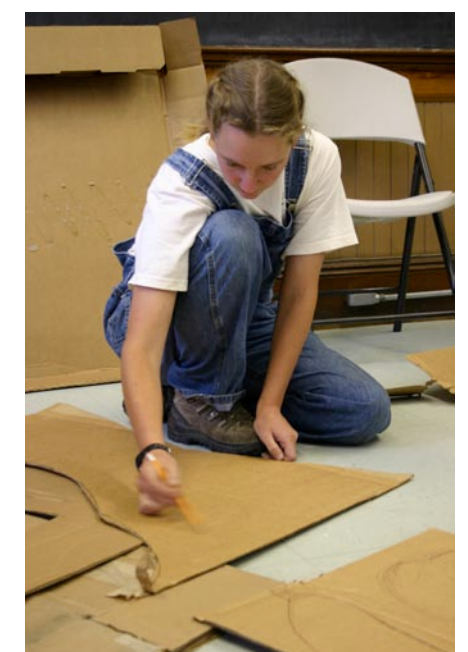
Sighting and Sounding Sustainability: Gardeners-to-Artists

To accompany the installation inside and outside of the museum, we invited local residents to explore their individual and/or collective relationships to edible plants, vegetables and fruits in this stage of the project, which was funded by a Harvard Center grant for Publicly-Engaged Academic Projects. We offered residents several artistic forms through which to acknowledge these relationships. In a poetry workshop led by me, published poetry and film were used to elicit new poetry written by participants. Environmental music (including David Mallett's "Garden Song" and various songs by the Banana Slug String Band) provided another verbal layer to this part of the project.

Seitu Jones expanded participants' appreciation of the "people and plant" relationship profiled inside and outside the museum with his lecture about the (ancient) history and present of the collard green. He then led participants in the creation of their own visual art. Seeds, paint, recycled

cardboard, and book jacket covers (donated by the Ladd Library) were the primary resources for the vegetable and fruit masks.

With the power and beauty of New Orleans neighborhood marching traditions on my mind, I wanted to experiment with a parade



photos by Elizabeth S. Mitchell '09

as the culmination of the project. We held a "pre-parade party & workshop" on the day before the parade. Oscar Mokeme (Director, Museum of African Culture) led participants

in a rhythm workshop. Percussion instruments and more masks were made. Christina Bechstein (Green Horizons Fellow) added another resource to our available materials: shoestrings made at a local mill. Michael Reidy (Technical Director, Bates College Theater) consulted with participants during

College Theater. Each of the signs represents the phrase "People and Plants" in a language spoken by residents of Lewiston.

The "People and Plants" parade route took us through the streets of downtown Lewiston. At one of Lots to Gardens' sites

the workshop and enabled me to work with Bates College student Hwei Ling Ng who designed and created the parade signs & banner out of material donated by the Bates

(the Knox St. Garden) we paused for a brief ceremony which included a poetry reading and memorial collard green planting. Also, Rachel Desgrosseilliers, Director of Museum

SIGHTING AND SOUNDING SUSTAINABILITY

KIMBERLY RUFFIN

L/A, discussed Lewiston's past, present, and future, especially the importance of gardens to immigrants to the city.

A good time was had by all! It was a true pleasure to see everyone gathered and watch people join us who had no previous knowledge of the parade. With the feedback we've received, it is clear that people want to celebrate their ecological embeddedness in this way.

In *Earth Democracy: Justice, Sustainability, and Peace*, Vandana Shiva writes, "In each age of enclosures and displacement, progress is invoked to sell a project in which the elite usurp the resources and livelihoods of the poor as the inevitable next step in human evolution.... Justice and sustainability both demand that we do not use more resources than we need. Restraint in resource use and living within nature's limits are preconditions for social justice. The commons are where justice and sustainability converge, where ecology and equity meet." This collaboration gave me the chance to learn from others and share a vision of sustainability. In addition, it showed me the community garden has the potential to be

a new "commons" where the legacies of rural agriculture and urban dynamism can creatively co-exist.

-Kimberly Ruffin



photos by Elizabeth S. Mitchell '09

SIGHTING AND SOUNDING SUSTAINABILITY

PearsonWidrig DanceTheater

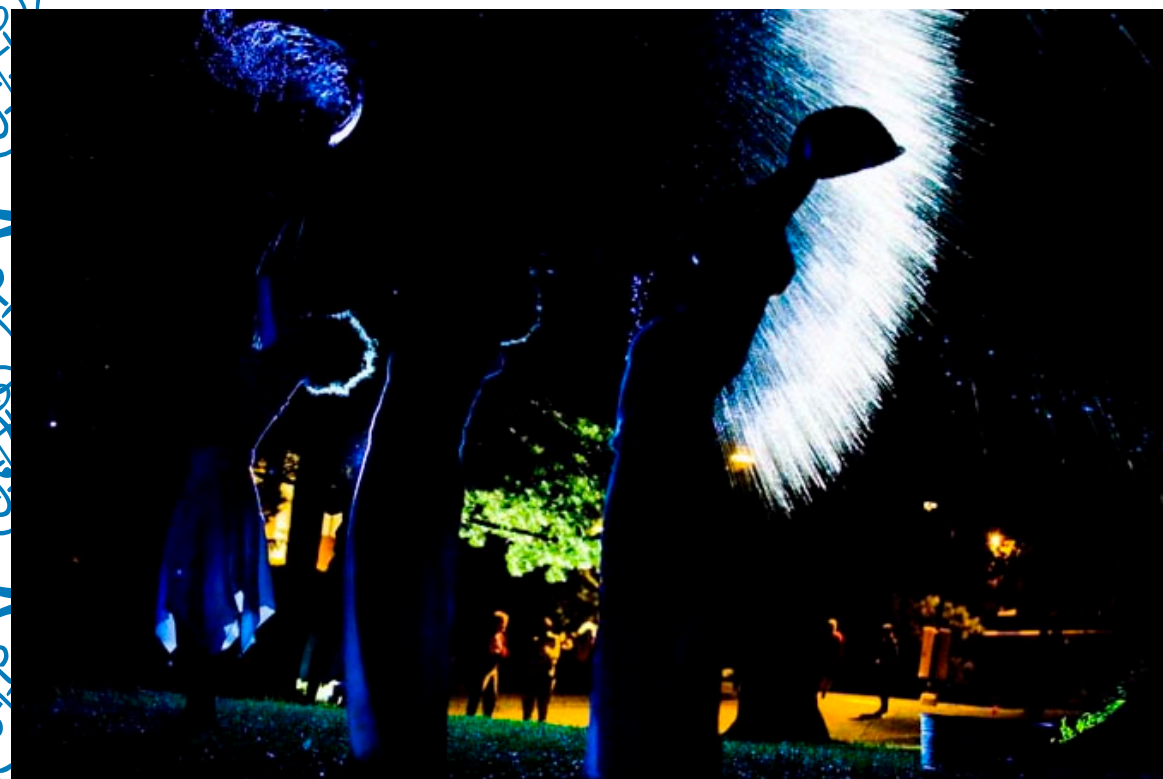
PEARSONWIDRIG
DANCETHEATER

ROBERT EEN
LAURA FAURE

PearsonWidrig DanceTheater has an international following for work that transforms the familiar into the mysterious, the subversive, and the intimate. PWDT returned to Maine to create a magical site-specific performance/installation on and around Lake Andrews on the Bates College campus. Incorporating forty dancers, twenty-plus singers and musicians, and youth and community members of all ages, this event utilized sound, light, movement and inventive set pieces to enliven the night environment. Audience members experienced a myriad of surprises and delights as they wandered through the site.



photos by Phyllis Graber Jensen/Bates College



Carol Dilley

CAROL DILLEY

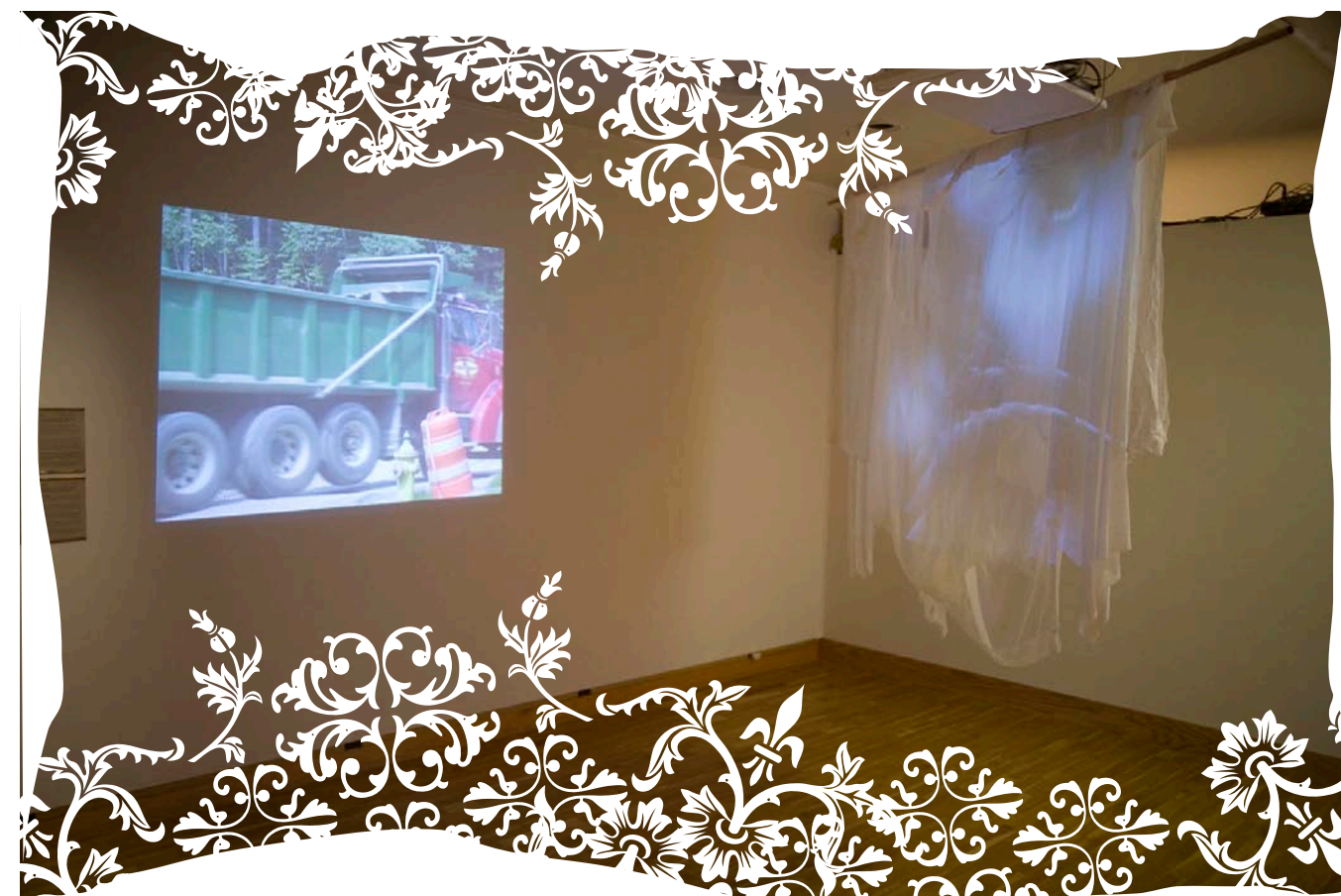
We leave remnants of our passing; footprints, buildings, intangible fragments of human stories that haunt a place long after a moment passes. Places leave their imprints on us; the smell of the air, a plangent soundscape, a barefoot dance on a warmly lit theater stage, that same dance on a wet Maine beach in a brisk, cold wind on a too-late autumn day. We have memory of our environment; our environment remembers us.

Digital image and sound recordings help us relive, understand, intensify, and even reshape our human memory of environment. They also allow environment to speak more directly to us, representations of its delicate ephemera freed in time and space. By transforming and editing digital memories, we map both human dance and environmental sights and sounds onto fresh environmental terrain in an art museum.

Dancers and musicians, traditionally and honorably economical and efficient with earthly material resources, have long been environmentally green citizens. Technology enables us to extend this practice with more global consciousness. We invite your participation.

Bill Matthews

BILL MATTHEWS



IMPRINTS

carol dilley

CAROL DILLEY

bill matthews

BILL MATTHEWS



photos by Carol Dilley



IMPRINTS



I would add to it that what sticks in my body memory of the shooting of the dance footage is mostly feet. The vital information about place and surface comes primarily through my feet, accompanied by other skin surfaces and the usual senses that we use for orientation. Feet measure, sift the space for obstacles, dangers, warn of shifting levels. While we do spend plenty of time on the ground reading the surface with face skin and elbows, it is the feet that are most attuned to that job. The changing surfaces of our landscape were pretty dramatic to the dancers trained to flat floors and enclosed rooms. Temperature, sun in the eyes, dirt in the eyes, cool grass, sand scraping off skin, the unlevel earth, ground that doesn't push back, the grass hiding the irregularities – all of this was vital information accessed through our moving feet. These all become part of my piece and despite my eventual detachment from my own dancing image, certainly informed how I saw and see the footage. An interaction with feet.

The seed of our project *Imprints* was an opportunity, a call to Bates faculty and staff to see who might be interested in intersecting with artists around the idea of art and sustainability. It was open to many interpretations of how art, environment, sustainability might intersect. The artist in me responded first and the faculty member agreed to support myself as an artist. It was as if the opportunity stepped in directly into the path I was already on.

I had been working with Bill Matthews on video dance images in a new course called Atelier. We were both intrigued with the reconfiguring of dance through digital manipulation, a new color was a new dance, a shift in time, a change of place, a new score, rearranging what came before and what came after was a different kind of choreography. This led directly to the idea of making a video installation that was about the reconfiguring of dance through change of place, change of environment, and conversely, the

reconfiguring of a space or environment by the presence of a dance, or the simple addition of human flesh to a landscape that already bore a human imprint, such as the campus or a theater, or even a wildlife conservancy and a beach. As a dancer and choreographer the meaning of a body in space is essential material, and the nature of both that body and the space is vital information to any moment.

Sustainability is dance in so many ways – sustaining the body, sustaining the movement, leaving enough organic dance remnants after a move is made to create a complete piece in the eyes of an audience. Inhabiting our bodies, as we do in dance, leads quite naturally to a sense of conscious living as part of the studio practice of my work. We map our physical selves in space, in place, in context and over time. It is our building material. Dance demands self awareness in relation to a larger world encompasses the dancer 3 feet away, the floor, the studio, the town, the dance world, the region, and on and on. We

invest our bodies in community every time we come into a conscious dance state.

Sound and dance are utterly intertwined, if there is not music there is the rhythm of breath and a heartbeat defining time. The radical effect of sound on dance, defines the environment in which dance happens as much or perhaps more than the physical space. Sound and space. Space and flesh. Flesh and sound. These relationships are what dance is made of and what sustains it. This relationship was central to our collaboration and our reinterpretation of the spaces we inhabited and those we reimagined.

For both of us it was a direction we were heading at a more leisurely pace. To commit to making an installation in a group show was a jump start to asserting ourselves as visual artists rather than a composer and choreographer who was interested in video. We stepped directly into using our new medium to a purpose beyond discovery.

- Carol Dilley



Carol Dilley and I considered a number of locations for shooting the footage of her powerful and beautiful duet *Neck and Neck* which became the source material for much of our work for this show. In addition to using the theater stage (a dance's "natural ecosystem") and a dramatic Atlantic shoreline conservation preserve, we shot at sites on the Bates campus—a field next to Rand Hall dormitory, the softball field, a grassy and muddy patch behind Roger Williams dormitory.

One of the pieces included in our installation is the video *Neck-Morse-Neck-Schaeffer* which combines a version of the dance performed on the stage of Schaeffer Theatre on the Bates campus and a version performed on the beach at the Morse Mt. Conservancy in midcoast Maine.

Using a number of video editing tools, we have been able to overlay, combine, contrast, and move our dance imagery from

one environment to another. *Neck and Neck* is a dance that requires not just agility and grace, but unusual physical strength on the part of both dancers. In one of the many high points in the choreography, a relatively small woman (Dilley) is required to carry a much much larger man (Qua) on her shoulders, while he twists her head hard to one side. It is the kind of theatrical moment that makes an audience flinch and gasp in physical empathy whether they see it live or video-recorded. It is a moment of pure human muscular and aesthetic power and endurance. The viewer will see this moment repeated in a number of different contexts, its meaning changing each time.

The natural sound of this dance in the theater is that of bare feet landing or dragging on a smooth hard floor, with a constant background of ragged, rhythmic breathing as two dancers near their limits exchange oxygen for carbon dioxide and

blood sugar for the energy to perform extreme choreography. In the theater, this is a loud and impressive soundtrack which matches well the visual impact of the piece and the struggles it portrays.

When we moved this dance outdoors to video it however, its natural sound disappeared, the breathing masked or absorbed into wind and waves on the beach or passing traffic on the campus. The steps are muffled by soft grass, mud, or sand. The new soundtracks which emerged allowed us to see it anew; the viewer will notice this effect in the installation, as they watch the dance while hearing the sea, the wind, birdsong, thunderstorms and spring peepers, among others.

We were aware that the college planned new building projects at some of our on-campus filming sites, but only when their massive, deafening, obtrusive and disruptive scale became apparent did we realize what a powerful contrast existed between the ephemeral barefoot imprint of our dance on those places and the implacable

permanence of the thousands of tons of construction material dropped directly onto that imprint, rendering it crushed, lost, forgotten, historically obliterated.

On these sites, new dance music is performed by 1000-horsepower stench-belching internal combustion engines seemingly unmuffled, the nerve-jangling beeping of multiple trucks backing up simultaneously, the clang of steel striking riveting steel repeatedly. It is so noisy human conversation becomes impossible to hear, much less the sound of breathing or of bare feet. In these conditions, mere dancers have no chance of creating any sort of impression or imprint, and would be crushed under even the smallest corner of new concrete, steel, and brick. Some of the video chapters in the installation thus may seem to have become memorials for our local open space and greenery, laments for human bodies doing the most they can possibly do, yet having no chance of competing with mechanized 'progress.'

But—as we have discovered to our joy—

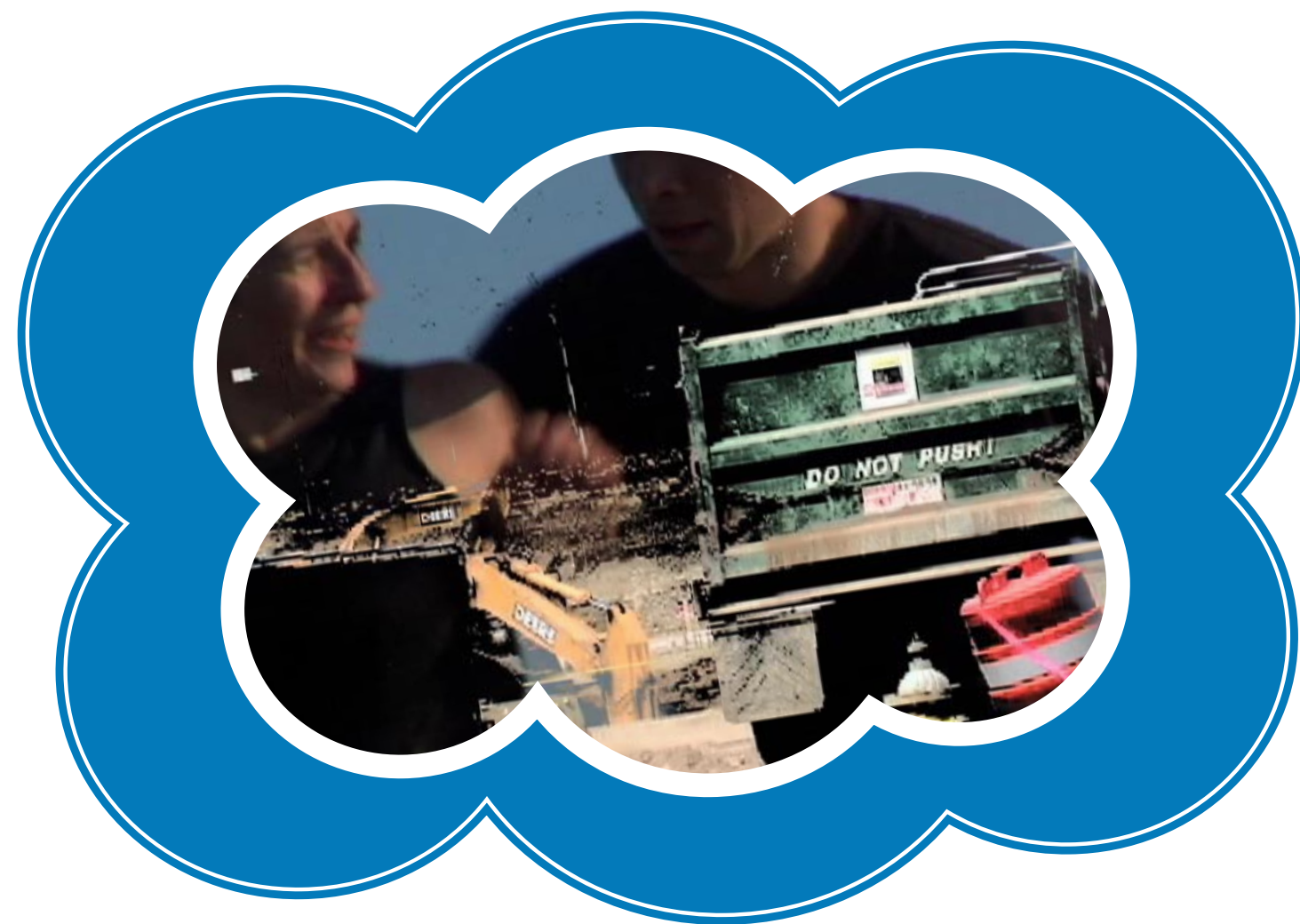
A LOCAL OPPORTUNITY

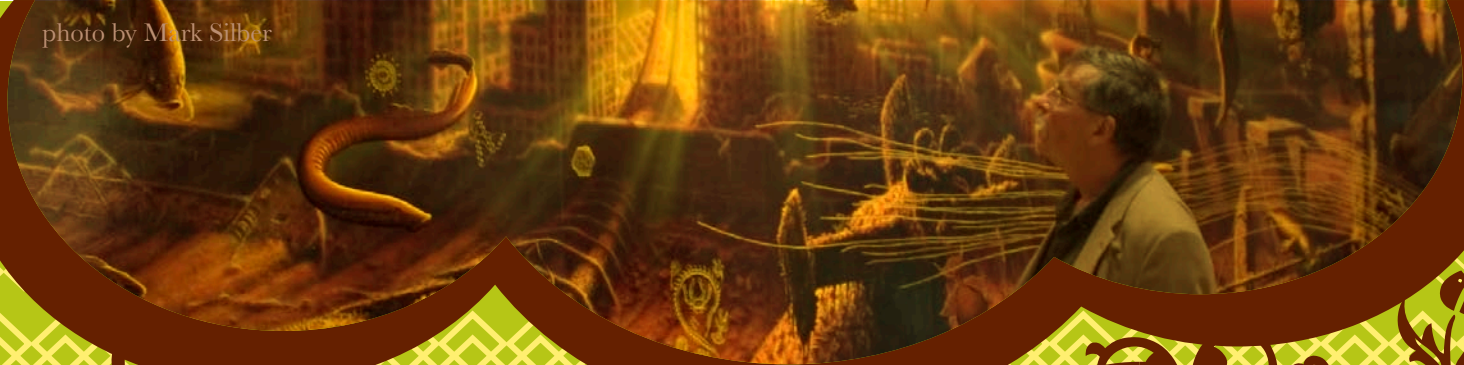
we have been able to recapture and reclaim these spaces for dance, even as massive construction projects proceed on top of where they once existed. In the piece included on this DVD, *Bates Etude #2* footage of two dancers in a gentle duet behind waving beach grass is combined with scenes of construction activity, we can change its meaning entirely by changing soundtracks. When set to the noise of construction, the dance inevitably loses and the viewer experiences futility, anger and loss. But when set to a quiet cycle of repeating sad chords accompanying slowed-down catbird song, this same footage becomes pastoral and nostalgic. We see the handsome young dancers in beach grass and hear life instead of the front-end loader and dump-truck. We experience the dance and not its obliteration. We see the dancers commenting on the construction, rather than the opposite. By slowing down and lowering the pitch of the catbird, we can translate its song into ranges more suitable for human perception, to open up an entirely fresh way for us to understand the natural. New video tools allow us to see and hear

the world, and the place our art holds in it, anew.

For us, these dances remembered on video have achieved meaning and stature greater than that of controversial new buildings, no matter how stubbornly heavy and pretentiously scaled they are. It is a matter of consciousness. If we as humans are to survive ourselves and slow our ongoing destruction of the planet, we must make every effort to see and hear the artist's work clearly, and understand that it is as great or even greater a monument to human possibility than any new building could possibly be. No building will be saving us. Only we and our collective imagination can do that.

-Bill Matthews





Agnes Denes
Alexis Rockman
Chris Jordan
Michael Shaughnessy
David Maisel
Virginia Valdes
Anne-Katrin Spiess
Mark Silber
Karen Adrienne
Beth O'Halloran
Christina Bechstein
Julie Patton
Seitu Jones
Bruce "Sunpie" Barnes
Carol Dilley



photo by Virginia Valdes

EXHIBITION CHECKLIST

Karen Adrienne

Core Sample #1, 2006
Rust monotype
23 x 32 inches

Core Sample #2, 2006
Rust monotype w/chine collé
23 x 32 inches

Core Sample #3, 2006
Rust monotype w/chine collé
23 x 32 inches

Excavation Site, 2006
Rust monotype with chine collé
14 x 25 inches

Excavation Site, 2006
Rust monotype
14 x 25 inches

Squaring the Circle, 2006
Intaglio monoprint with rust
14 x 14 inches

Reclamation, 2006
Intaglio monoprint with rust and chine collé
14 x 25 inches

Beehive Collective

Biodevastation, 2001
Ink on post-industrial polymer
84 x 44 inches

Puppeteer, 2000
Ink on post-industrial polymer
64 x 48 inches

Agnes Denes

Wheatfield-A Confrontation-Battery Park Landfill,
Summer 1982
Nine c-prints, each 16 x 20 inches

*The Flying Fish Pyramid—a Self-Supporting Underwater
Habitat*, 1994
Limited edition lithograph
38 ½ x 49 inches

When the Pyramid Awakens, a Self-Contained Future City,
1994
Limited edition lithograph
38 ½ x 49 inches

March of Genesis, 2006
India ink on silk vellum
61 x 39 inches

Chris Jordan

Circuit Boards #2, New Orleans, 2005
Archival inkjet
44 x 64 inches

Cell Phones #2, Atlanta, 2005
Archival inkjet
44 x 90 inches

Beth O’Halloran

Breaking Falls, 2007
Inkjet print
102 x 162 inches

David Maisel

Lake Project #3, 2003
Archival C-Prints
60 x 60 inches

Lake Project #5, 2003
Archival C-Prints
60 x 60 inches

Alexis Rockman

Manifest Destiny, 2003-04
Oil and Acrylic on 4 wood panels
96 x 240 inches

Michael Shaughnessy

New State Rising, 2007
Wood, twine, and hay
264 x 224 x 30 inches

Mark Silber

From Seed to Harvest, 2006-2007
Mixed media sculpture
72 x 60 inches diameter

Anne-Katrin Spiess

Journey, 2007
Performance/mixed media installation
Eight days, 500 miles/114 x 252 inches

Virginia Valdes

Wasteland, 2007
4 channel interactive installation
Collected and found “garbage”,
transparency inkjet prints
168 x 144 x 114 inches
music by **Laurent Brondel**

Christina Bechstein

Social Fabric, 2007
Mixed media
336 x 114 inches

Seitu Kenneth Jones

Sighting and Sounding Sustainability, 2007
Acrylic on cardboard
108 x 180 x 120 inches

Julie Patton and Jonathan Skinner

A Room for Opal, 2007
Multimedia installation
132 x 120 x 114 inches

PearsonWidrig DanceTheater and Robert Een

Paradise Pond, 2007
Performance

Carol Dilley and Bill Matthews

Imprints, 2006-2007
Multimedia installation
108 x 132 x 132 inches

Andrea Bisceglia and Molly Ladd

Urban Fruit Orchard, established 2007
Apple, blueberry, cherry, grape, peach, pear, raspberry
Approximately 1/6 acre

Teagan McMahon

Sustainable Wardrobe, 2007
Organic wool, recycled cotton, plastic bags, wire,
paper, and bottle caps

Jacob Bluestone

Untitled, 2007
C-print
20 x 24 inches

Untitled, 2007
C-print
20 x 24 inches

ARTISTS & CONTRIBUTORS

KAREN ADRIENNE

Karen Adrienne is a working artist, Professor of Art at the University of Maine at Augusta and founder of ARTDOGS Studios and Circling the Square Fine Art Press located in Gardiner, Maine. Karen is a multidisciplinary artist who investigates transformations, time and chance.

CHRISTINA BECHSTEIN

Christina Bechstein received her MFA from the Cranbrook Academy of Art, and attended the Skowhegan School of Painting and Sculpture. Her sculpture and public art projects work has been exhibited internationally. Among her many awards are the Boston Mayor's Individual Artist Humanist and a Graham Foundation fellowship.

MARK H. C. BESSIRE

Mark H.C. Bessire is the director of the Bates College Museum of Art. He edited *Cryptozoology: Out of Time Place Scale* and *Wenda Gu: From Middle Kingdom to Biological Millennium*, and *William Pope.l: The Friendliest Black Artists in America.*

AGNES DENES

Agnes Denes is widely recognized as a pioneer of ecological art. Among more than 300 solo and group exhibitions, her work has been shown at the Metropolitan Museum of Art, the Museum of Modern Art, and the Whitney Museum, and she has received several commissions for monumental public art projects. She lives in New York City.

CAROL DILLEY

Carol Dilley teaches dance at Bates College and has been choreographing, performing and teaching internationally for over 25 years. Recently she has enjoyed directing that accumulated knowledge of the dance towards exploring her art form's interface with digital media and a public beyond the proscenium stage.

SEITU KENNETH JONES

Seitu Kenneth Jones is a visual artist based in St. Paul, Minnesota, who has exhibited widely throughout the USA. He creates large-scale public art works and is currently Artist-in-Residence for the City of Minneapolis.

CHRIS JORDAN

Chris Jordan is a photographer based in Seattle, Washington, whose work has been exhibited widely around the world. His recent projects *Intolerable Beauty: Portraits of American Mass Consumption* and *In Katrina's Wake: Portraits of Loss from an Unnatural Disaster* delve into aspects of humankind's dynamic interaction with the environment. Among his many awards was the 2007 Green Leaf Award given by the Natural World Museum and United Nations Environment Programme.

DAVID MAISEL

David Maisel is a photographer based in the San Francisco Bay area. He has received fellowships from the National Endowment for the Arts and the Opsi Foundation. His artwork is represented in major public and private collections, including the Metropolitan Museum of Art, the Museum of Fine Arts Houston, and the Los Angeles County Museum of Art, among others. Maisel's photographs have been featured in numerous solo and group exhibitions in the United States, Canada, and Europe.

BILL MATTHEWS

Bill Matthews is the Alice Swanson Esty Professor of Music at Bates College. He is a composer and conductor who studied at Oberlin, the University of Iowa, Yale University, and the Institute of Sonology in the Netherlands. A recipient of several national awards and commissions, he is particularly interested in electronic and computer-generated music, and in American music of all types.

ARTISTS & CONTRIBUTORS

BETH O'HALLORAN

Beth O'Halloran is based in Dublin, Ireland and has exhibited in the U.K., U.S.A. and Japan. Upcoming projects include the release of a publication, *Rigor Mort*, a residency at Temple Bar gallery and Studios and several touring group exhibitions.

JULIE PATTON

Julie Patton might best be described as an intermedia artist working internationally in literature, film, visual art, and music in various combinations. She has received numerous awards, including the New York City Arts in Education Roundtable Award for Sustained Achievement in Poetry and fellowships from the Virginia Center for the Creative Arts and the Houston Museum of Fine Arts. She lives in Cleveland, Ohio, and New York City.

SARA PEARSON & PATRIK WIDRIG

Sara Pearson & Patrik Widrig, artistic directors of PEARSONWIDRIG DANCETHEATER, have gained an international following for dance theater work that transforms the familiar into the mysterious, the subversive, and the intimate. They have conducted numerous residencies at venues including the Bates Dance Festival, New York University, the Laban Centre in London, the Kyoto Arts Center, BankArt 1900 in Yokohama, the Instituto Nacional de Bellas Artes in Mexico, the Posthof Arts Center in Linz, Austria, the Chang Mu Arts Center in Seoul, Korea the New Zealand School of Dance, the international dance festivals in New Delhi, India and Lima, Peru.

ALEXIS ROCKMAN

Alexis Rockman is a native of New York City and a graduate of the School of Visual Arts. His work has been exhibited internationally in numerous solo and group exhibitions, and is in the permanent collections of several prominent institutions, including Boston Museum of Fine Arts, Brooklyn Museum, Los Angeles County Museum of Art, and Baltimore Museum of Art.

KIMBERLY RUFFIN

Kimberly Ruffin is Assistant Professor of English at Bates College and previously taught University of Notre Dame, and University of Illinois at Chicago. She was awarded an American Fellowship from the American Association of University Women in 2007. She is completing a monograph entitled *Black on Earth: African-Americans and Ecological Insights*.

DAVID SCOBEEY

David Scobey is the Donald W. and Ann M. Harward Professor of Community Partnerships and Director of the Harward Center for Community Partnerships at Bates College. He is a cultural historian of the 19th-century United States and author of *Empire City: The Making and Meaning of the New York City Landscape* (Temple University Press, 2002). From 1989 to 2005, he taught at the University of Michigan; there he founded the Arts of Citizenship Program, which did culture-making collaborations in the arts, humanities, and design.

MICHAEL SHAUGHNESSY

Michael Shaughnessy lives in southern Maine with his wife Malory and the remaining portion of four sons. He has exhibited widely across the country, creating large objects that either enthrall viewers or that make them sneeze, and he teaches sculpture at the University of Southern Maine.

ANTHONY SHOSTAK

Anthony Shostak is an artist, musician, and education curator for the Bates College Museum of Art. His work has been shown in the Americas and Europe, most recently with the traveling exhibition *Las Revoluciones del Mundo*, and he has organized several exhibitions, including *The Body Holographic: The Art of Harriet Casdin-Silver*.

ARTISTS & CONTRIBUTORS

MARK SILBER

Mark Silber a photographer and cultural anthropologist, has had local and national recognition as author of several documentary books, including *Rural Maine*, *Family Album*, and *Racing Stock*. He founded Hedgehog Hill Farm, and influential organic farm located in Sumner, Maine, and teaches anthropology at the University of Southern Maine.

JONATHAN SKINNER

Jonathan Skinner edits the review *ecopoetics* (www.ecopoetics.org), teaches Environmental Studies at Bates College and lives in Bowdoinham, the tick capital of Maine. His Political Cactus Poems are available through Palm Press (www.palmpress.org).

ANNE-KATRIN SPIESS

Anne-Katrin Spiess is a Land Artist who creates temporary installations in wide-open landscapes such as deserts and prairies. Her work is increasingly addressing ecological issues and she often participates in environmental panels and conferences.

VIRGINIA VALDES

Virginia Valdes is a multimedia artist and graphic designer. Her works have been exhibited in the US and Europe at venues such as P.S.1/MOMA, Lincoln Center, Stuttgart Film Winter Festival, The Black Maria Film Festival, FotoFest and PBS's Reel NY8. She is the recent recipient of a LEF Foundation grant.



ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Many individuals have contributed to Green Horizons throughout its evolution over the past few years, bringing in their ideas, energy, and professionalism in a synergistic and highly satisfying way. My colleagues Mark Bessire and Bill Low, and former co-worker Liz Sheehan have contributed in more ways than are possible to list here, and their indispensable optimism and creative thinking lie at the heart of this exhibition. To them, I express deep gratitude. Several interns also worked on the exhibition—Matt Heffernan '05, Jacob Bluestone '07, Erin Reed '08, and Renee Castonguay. Green Horizons was enriched by Bates Dance Festival Director Laura Faure, Harvard Center for Community Partnerships Director David Scobey, Environmental Studies professor Jonathan Skinner, English professor Kimberly Ruffin, Dance professor Carol Dilley and Alice Swanson Esty Professor of Music Bill Matthews, who brought in a set of marvelous artists previously unknown to me, and connected their work and our exhibition directly to their teaching. Anne Odom and Victoria Blaine-Wallace have been instrumental in the production of didactic and object labels and the museum website. Tom Wenzel, Dana Professor of Chemistry, lent his assistance in finding support for programming surrounding Green Horizons. Kirsten Walter of Lots-to-Gardens, Susan Hayward of the Stanton Bird Club, and Rachel Desgrosielliers of Museum L-A have been important community partners, working enthusiastically with artists. Installation would have been impossible without the good humor and flexibility of Kevin Callahan. Lastly, I want to recognize Dean Jill Reich and Assistant Dean Kerry O'Brien for their support, enthusiasm, and guidance. Thank you, all!

Major Funding of Green Horizons was provided by the Synergy Fund, dedicated to the development of education with focus on the synchronistic parallels in time and space across the subject matter of the liberal arts. The exhibition is also generously supported by Lee Smith, Jane and Alan Lehman, LEF Foundation and additional funding from the Maine Arts Commission, Margaret E. Burnham Charitable Trust, and Charles W. Radcliffe '50.

-Anthony Shostak

All photographs by Luc Demers unless otherwise noted.

Museum Staff

Mark H.C. Bessire, Director

William Low, Assistant Curator

Anthony Shostak, Education Curator

Martha David, Gallery Attendant

Constance McGillicuddy, Gallery Attendant

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But wait, there's more!

To view additional work by artists in digital video format,
close this document and open your dvd player.

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