



creative pioneers in uncharted territory

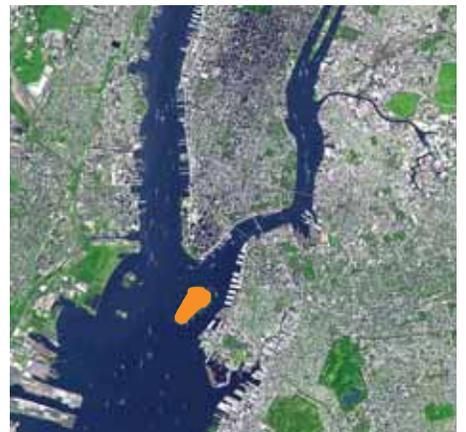
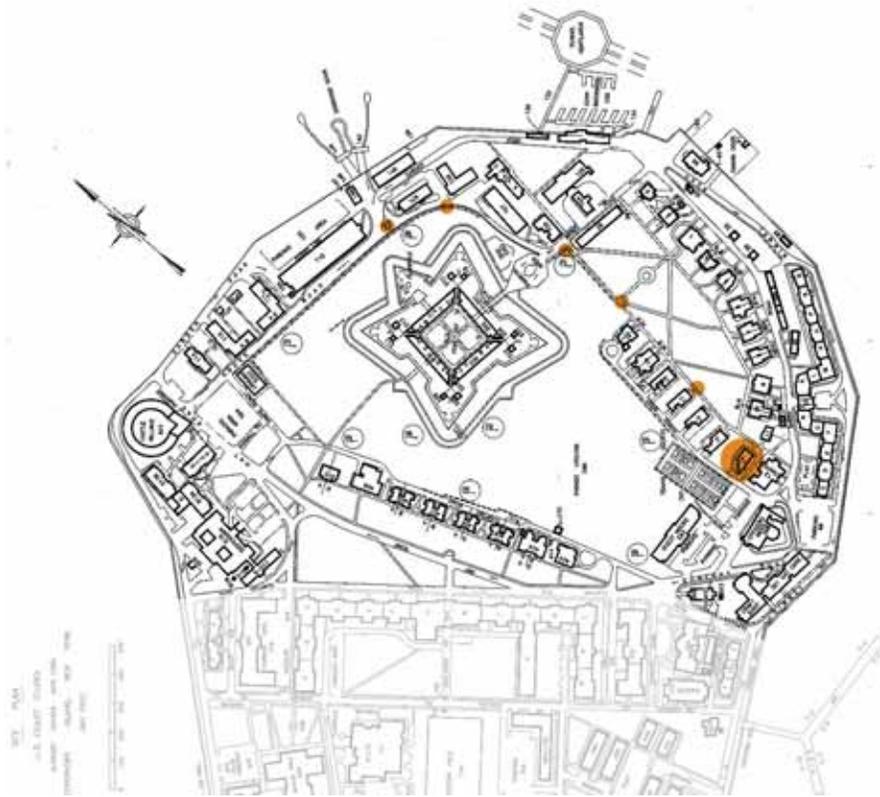
EMERGENCE



A RETROSPECTIVE EXHIBITION CATALOGUE

Featuring 30 Artists / Collectives
Building 14 (Commander's House), Governors Island, New York City Harbor

May 31st - July 26th 2008



Governors Island aerial view © Danny McL, Satellite image of New York City harbor, and Coast Guard map (top)

EMERGENCE

creative pioneers in uncharted territory

a summer exhibition of experimental and participatory art involving 30 artists / collectives, with a strong emphasis on audience and artist interaction. The exhibition opened on May 31st, coinciding with the grand opening of Governors Island to visitors for the 2008 season.

PARTICIPATING ARTISTS AND COLLECTIVES:

Anne Arden McDonald, artcodex, Asha Ganpat, Avant Car Guard (South Africa), Chris Jordan, Barend de Wet / Douglas Gimberg / Christian Nerf (South Africa), Damon Hamm, Erik Fabian, Eugenia Yu, Friendly Falcons & Their Friend the Snake, G-77, Jason Van Anden / Nat Hawks / David Liatti, John Krill, John Walter, Michael Alan, Monica Muller, Peripheral Media Projects, Pornj Diamond Cell, Sarah N. Phillips, Saviour Scraps, Tara Parsons, Tim & Martin Dockery, Triangle Project (Denmark, Istanbul), and Urban Homesteading Project. Emergence is curated by Johan Kritzinger, Joyce Manalo, Elke Dehner, and Audrey Boguchwal.

May 31 - July 26, 2008

Building 14 (Commander's House), Governors Island, NY

See our online catalogue at - www.emergenceshow.org

EMERGENCE is a project of FIGMENT 2008. FIGMENT is a project of Action Arts League, and is produced by a coalition of volunteers in partnership with The Pure Project. FIGMENT is made possible in part with public funds from the Manhattan Community Arts Fund, supported by the New York City Department of Cultural Affairs and administered by the Lower Manhattan Cultural Council. In addition, EMERGENCE is supported by a grant from the Black Rock Arts Foundation.

FIGMENT*



PURE
PROJECT

Lower
Manhattan
Cultural
Council





Building 14 (The Commander's house), Governors Island, New York City harbor - Interior and exterior views

CREATIVE PIONEERS IN UNCHARTED TERRITORY

In these times, when society is dominated by commercial value systems and established cultural institutions, an unexpected cultural phenomenon emerged on this small island - a deserted military outpost on the outskirts of one of the largest and most intensely watched cities in the world, New York. It is here that a community of creative pioneers explored the human situation, in an attempt to re-introduce or re-inject a sense of inclusion and empowerment into the cultural mainstream by pushing the boundaries of traditional practice.

The theme, 'Emergence: Creative Pioneers in Uncharted Territory' was chosen to resonate within the context of Governors Island and the emergence occurring on this site that is so rich in history. This show in the 'Commander's House' (Building 14) is part of the growing cultural renaissance of the island and an exploration of its creative potential.

Emergence is a show of transformation. The Commander's house has morphed from an abandoned outpost into an

inclusive, interactive, 3-dimensional, living exhibit, featuring contributions from visual artists working across fields of media which include but are not limited to sculpture, installation art, aerial kinetic sculpture, photography, and computer graphic sequencing. The installation changed over the course of the summer as a result of the interactive elements and the engagement of visiting participants.

What are the resultant artifacts in the experience of discovery of land, creating a new set of rules and culture? What is the romanticized idea of moving to a brave new world? These can include authentic objects and ephemera of time or contemporary objects that reference people and things of the past. Who are the people who lived and passed through the island? The present reveals our questioning of economic, political, environmental, social and sustainability issues. What are challenges that we are facing today? Creative explorations of the future will reveal new inventions, manifestos and fantasies that illuminate our understanding of self, place, change and time.

CURATORIAL STATEMENT

THE VISION - by Johan Kritzinger

It is our interest to mobilize and activate projects that challenge or disrupt a traditional approach to art making and reception. Producing a show outside the setting of a gallery introduces a far more interesting embedded context within which to engage artists to consider characteristics, political, social and historical meanings. It also catches the unsuspecting visitor by surprise and throws them out of their ordinary orientation towards art. As artists and curators, it is our duty to present the new art as it emerges, to prepare a critical context for the reception of the work, and to engage actively with the audience and their interpretation. [1] The participatory approach of the show functions as an effective tool for dismantling a passive audience experience and extending it beyond the role of the observer or consumer, to the participant. In this way, artists have the unique opportunity of involving the audience in an active dialogue, where the inferred meaning is better able to have a lasting impression. With the exploratory blurring of boundaries between artist and audience, the subject still remains mediated by the artists but what Emerges is the magic of participating in the process.

Emergence is an important exploration and a cross section of an avenue of our current contemporary practice. However, the overall importance of the show is only validated by the influence it might have as a case study on furthering our understanding of this particular field and its relevance within the context of Governors Island. Emergence was also a stepping-stone to the realization of Governors Island in New York City harbor as a resource, platform and base for an international artistic community; a place where a new culture can emerge and grow.

[1] Teresa Gleadowe, "Curating in a changing climate"; in 'Curating In The 21st Century', edited by Gavin Wade, published by The New Art Gallery Walsall / University of Wolverhampton; 2000; pg 29 - 38

THE APPROACH - by Joyce Manalo

It all started with the first site visit. A sunny day on Governors Island. Artist and curators were keen to discover the space where the show took place: Building 14, also known as the Commander's House. As you can see from the images, the space is atypical for a gallery show, an alternative to the "white box". The artists were excited and inspired by the greenery and the historical importance of this island. The curators were very pleased with the artists' response and mandated full documentation of proposals, installation, execution and emergence. In the standards and practice of the Open Source Movement, the curatorial team implemented a Wiki in order to facilitate communication during the curatorial process. The wiki is an online repository for documents, still and moving images. But a wiki is more than a place to "house" articles, it is founded on the principles of community, exchange, transparency, and dialogue. These elements are principles of participatory art.

Upon receiving proposals for Emergence, the team was pleasantly surprised to receive several submissions from many of the artists, independent of each other, that explored themes of sustainability, preservation, and revitalization of the environment. Other artists

proposed ideas that challenged the viewer to examine the current war, money, escape, childhood, foreign culture, security and travel.

Thus, the artists in this exhibition, the curators, interns, volunteers - who have all traveled over the East River, the Atlantic Ocean and the Equatorial Divide - and the audience are all, in a sense, Pioneers in an Uncharted Territory.

THE PERFORMANCES - by Elke Dehner

When we go and see a traditional live performance, we commonly look for an immediate experience, which transcends the ordinary and excites us, and which we then share with others by talking or writing about it. Theater, concerts, opera or dance allow us to connect with each other through the discourse around the experience. Participatory performances take this kind of connection to another level. When we become part of a performance, we are actively engaged in the creative process. And, more often than not, we find ourselves interacting and connecting with a stranger.

When we engage in a participatory performance, we switch from "observation" to "play". Our mind enjoys the journey and we don't need the intermediary of a stage performance in order to live the thrill of the immediate experience. The performance artist provides the platform, on which we are invited to explore the realm of the incongruous, the haphazard, the mystery and the fairy tale. We celebrate the silly and the poetic, within ourselves and in relation to the other.

THE NOTION OF PARTICIPATORY ART - by Audrey Boguchwal

While there is no uniform definition of art, most works seen in galleries, museums or performance spaces in the west tend to be deliberate creations by humans that have some sort of message, meaning or function that they communicate to the world. There are clear distinctions between the art, the artist, and the audience.

Emergence exhibits participatory works that break down these barriers. Participatory art engages the audience directly in the creative process, allowing viewers to become co-creators of the work instead of merely passive observers. Its intent is to challenge the dominant form of making art in the West, in which a small class of professional artists make art. Typically, the audience takes on the role of consumers, merely buying the works available in the market. As a result, we are often alienated from art because we are taught by our society only how to appreciate it, and rarely how to create it ourselves.

Emergence seeks to reintroduce the participatory into art, in order to reawaken the creative process. The individual creativity unlocked by the art experiences at Emergence does not mean that we must all be all be artists in the traditional sense. We can transport that creativity back to our daily lives, applying it to work in business, education, healthcare, international policies and any field. By channeling our creative output, we can produce meaningful and constructive global change.

CATALOGUE ENTRY I

by Amanda Gilmore

Bloomsburg University of Pennsylvania class of 2007 (Art History and French Language & Literature)

Currently Account Coordinator: artnet.com

From its earliest origins, art has been, among many things, mimetic expression of the physical world around the artist. Mimetic expression serves many purposes in the human mind, from replicating the physical likeness of other members of the artist's community and culture, to magically invoking powers perceived to be greater than the artist. In all cases, the value assigned to the image comes from the human mind viewing the art, as opposed to being an inherent quality of the piece. Additionally, as with many aspects of the human experience, art through history has oscillated between a predominantly figurative style and an abstracted style, moving in a cyclical pattern, yet generally returning to figuration. With both extremes of style, art's mimetic value is still communicated through the work. For example, compare a drawing of a normal horse to Kandinsky's abstract creation from *Painting with White Border*: most viewers still see that it is a horse.

With its representative value residing in the human mind, art becomes, in one sense, a plaything of the intellect. Mimesis (or lack thereof) is ultimately determined by the spectator's perspective. The works comprising *Emergence: Creative Pioneers in Uncharted Territory* are generally mimetic of objects around us (a paper airplane, oysters, forks) and, in some cases, are made of objects around us (plants, plastic bottles). The concept of participatory art then takes the idea of art as plaything a step further: it extends from the intangible intellectual realm and allows it to become a physical plaything as well.

With this extension into the physical world, the viewer's possibilities for creating meaning for the work also expand; the visitor is not only limited to what the artist has represented but he or she can physically manipulate the work to imbue it with new meaning. In *Fork it Over*, Tara Parsons has used one of the two kitchens in *Building 14* as a room-sized canvas. She invites viewers to cut out paper forks from a pre-traced template and place them anywhere in the room with tape. To initiate the placement of the forks, Parsons placed several throughout the room, including a chandelier fashioned from forks and taped to the room's light fixture. The entire room falls within the "frame" of this piece and within the frame, viewers can add forks, move forks that have already been placed, cut the forks into different patterns, and otherwise manipulate the physical reality of the installation. Each visitor will view a different piece and will be able to alter that piece to suit whichever image was in his or her mind.

The forms created by these placed paper forks range in their specificity of resemblance to concrete objects, such as the chandelier to a mass of paper forks simply dropped in the sink. Are the forks in the sink supposed to resemble suds, water, or milk? And does it even matter? It is up to each individual viewer to engage the piece to make it better suit their personal ideas for the work's significance. But with all the forms in this piece, the chandelier, forks left in the sink, forks hung from the refrigerator shelves like icicles (or spilled milk, perhaps), the acknowledgement of mimetic quality is given or not given by the visitor.

The difference between *Fork it Over* and other interactive pieces compared to traditional fine art is the physical control over the piece, moving it beyond the mental and literal picture frame. Participatory art allows the viewer to engage with the piece on multiple levels: intellectually, emotionally, and also physically, reinventing the artwork as a plaything in both a literal and conceptual sense.

CATALOGUE ENTRY II

by Sara Barth

Parsons School of Design, Architectural Design (undergrad - 2010)

It was a nice, unexpected surprise for many people to stumble upon the Emergence Gallery on their walk around Governors Island. As of all of the houses are extremely beautiful, yet few are open to the public, having the chance to actually enter and explore one is a unique opportunity. This exploration, combined with the participatory nature of the exhibits, created a truly unique environment at Emergence.

The gallery not only gave new life to an old building, it allowed visitors to interact with art in a way in which they were not accustomed. Inside the house, people were encouraged to engage in behavior that would have them swiftly escorted out of an ordinary gallery. Drawing on the walls, swinging around the installations, and weaving the front porch is certainly not typical gallery visiting behavior. Thus, quite understandably, some people were hesitant to interact with the art at first. However, upon being reassured that it was perfectly all right to play the little piano and it was entirely acceptable to cut up the paper forks, everyone was delighted. Visitors began to break out of their passive gallery viewing customs. Slowly, instead of standing back and viewing the art from a comfortable distance, they lost their inhibitions, delved in, and discovered how the pieces were interactive. It was this participation that ultimately brought the art to life, as it allowed the visitors to combine their efforts with those of the artists to create entirely new installations. Because the pieces were always in a state of transition one, could come to the gallery one week and things might look quite different than they had the previous week.

At the end of the exhibit, the gallery had been entirely transformed. By comparing the house in the beginning with the house at the end of the nine weeks, the works served as a gauge of the level of interaction visitors had with the pieces. The traditional colonial porch became a tapestry of intricately woven colorful fabric, while the kitchen cupboards were bursting with cut paper forks and the living room wall became a mural of visitors self portraits. Not only did the appearance of the individual works gauge the participation of the visitors, collectively they served as a testament to the skill and creativity of those who came to Governors Island that summer.

If the work had not been participatory, the gallery experience would have been entirely different. The visitors combined their actions with those of the artist to create a new and ever-

changing piece. Without the artist's initial idea, the works would never have been born; however, without the contributions of the visitors, the works would never have matured. They would have remained stagnant in the form of their initial creation and never been given the chance to blossom into something more. While this requires the artists to relinquish control of their pieces to the unknown, opening up their work to outside participation creates a whole new sensory experience for the visitor. It is this new experience that make the Emergence Gallery unique and memorable to all those who got to visit it.

CATALOGUE ENTRY III

by Kim Anderson

New York University, Gallatin, Art and Comedy (undergrad - 2010)

As parents walked into the Emergence gallery with their children, their entrance was usually accompanied by a warning to the kids: "Don't. Touch. Anything." As a gallery guide, I would then explain the nature of the gallery to the family and encourage the children to interact with the art. Each time this happened, I was struck by what seemed to be a common, collective misconception that all art is somehow fragile and meant to stand on its own. Without an audience, however, art's function would change dramatically. So much of the art that is created is intended to project an idea or feeling about the world, and without an audience, art could spread no message. Whether one actually alters a piece of art or simply looks at it, one is necessarily interacting and participating with it.

Before Emergence, my initial thoughts on participatory art had to do with pieces that remained static but were partially defined by the audience. Cindy Sherman's Centerfolds, for example, depicted Sherman in positions of terror or submissiveness, looking at the camera. The viewer of these photographs becomes part of the piece, acting as predatory male eyes regarding the female with an air of authority, even abusiveness. These photographs were criticized under the pretense that they encouraged violence against women. To think that such a strong reaction was evoked regarding the potential societal damage the photographs could do demonstrates the magnitude of the audience's role in art. The fact that by looking at the photographs the audience was necessarily engaged in the pieces qualifies the work as interactive, although the photographs were not physically altered by the viewer.

The work presented in the Emergence gallery was participatory in that people not only engaged the work by viewing it - they literally touched it, added to it, and changed it. The pieces themselves were literally altered by, and often defined by, the audience's participation. The G7 time capsule, for example, depended upon participation to make it a time capsule. Without the addition of peoples' thoughts about the present day, written on index cards and put in the capsule, what became a capsule would have simply been a well-Indexed bowl. Similarly, the Pornj Diamond Cloud piece was brought to life by those who interacted with it and participated in its creation, writing on the diamonds hanging from the ceiling. Even those pieces that did not involve the addition of a physical entity by the audience were participatory. The Oscillating Coil, for

example, depended on the interaction of an audience member to bring it to life. Without anyone near the coil, it remained still and it was only when one got close enough to cause it to move did it begin to oscillate. Not only did the pieces in the Emergence gallery need participants to make the pieces complete, they needed participants to allow the pieces to convey certain meanings. Fork It Over, too, depended on an audience to create forks, otherwise the magnitude of the cost of the Iraq war would not have been realized by the piece. By encouraging participation, the pieces in the Emergence gallery challenged the "Do Not Touch" notion of art, demonstrating the importance of an audience's interaction with art for a piece to be successful.

GOVERNORS ISLAND LANDMARK SUMMER

2008: Governors Island Reaches the Tipping Point, and Art Pushes It over the Edge

by David Koren

During the summer 2008 season, from May 30 through October 12, over 125,000 people visited Governors Island - more than twice the number (55,000) who visited in 2007. The attendance figures show that the island is gaining momentum as increasing numbers of visitors are drawn to its shores. There has been a significant increase in the amount of public programming available on the island in 2008, giving New Yorkers and their guests more reason to visit than in past years.

Since the former Army and Coast Guard base was transferred from the Federal Government in 2003, the island has been a place in search of a mission and a constituency. The Governors Island Preservation and Education Corporation, a joint city-state agency, was established to lead the process of developing the island as a place for the public benefit. The island first opened to the general public in a very limited way in 2004, and attendance has been gradually growing ever since. The Public Art Fund and the Lower Manhattan Cultural Council both sponsored limited arts installations on the island in 2005. In 2006 and 2007, a number of other arts groups, including the fledgling FIGMENT group, planned events and installations on the island. In 2008, the island reached a tipping point in that it finally attracted enough arts-related programming where it could be said that the island was on its way to becoming a unique cultural destination in its own right.

Just a few of the arts-related projects that were installed on and around the island in the summer of 2008 are described in brief below:

The Waterfalls by Olafur Eliasson / The Public Art Fund

The Public Art Fund, in collaboration with the City of New York, presented The New York City Waterfalls, a major work of public art by internationally acclaimed artist Olafur Eliasson. The exhibition of four 90-to 120-foot-tall man-made waterfalls was on view from June 26 through October 13, 2008 at four sites on the shores of the New York City waterfront: at the Brooklyn anchorage of the Brooklyn Bridge; near the Brooklyn Heights Promenade, between Piers 4 and 5; at Pier 35, just north of the Manhattan Bridge; and on the north shore of Governors Island.

Mayor Bloomberg called the waterfalls a, "beautiful symbol of the energy and vitality that we are bringing back to our waterfront in all five boroughs." Susan K. Freedman, President of the Public Art Fund says that by commissioning Eliasson's piece, "we are redefining public art as a vital force in the city and encouraging people to stop and look at their surroundings in a whole new way."

Playing the Building by David Byrne / Creative Time

Creative Time presented Playing the Building, a 9,000-square-foot, interactive, site-specific installation in the Battery Maritime Building, the ferry terminal through which visitors leave Manhattan for Governors Island. David Byrne transformed the interior of the historic Battery Maritime Building into a massive sound sculpture that all visitors were invited to sit and "play." The project consisted of a retrofitted antique organ, placed in the center of the building's cavernous second-floor gallery, that controlled a series of devices attached to its structural features—metal beams, plumbing, electrical conduits, and heating and water pipes. These machines vibrated, struck and blew across the building's elements, triggering unique harmonics and producing finely tuned sounds.

IN-SITE by The Sculptors Guild

The Sculptors Guild of New York produced IN-SITE, a summer-long exhibition of sculpture, installation and multi-media artworks to celebrate the transformation of historic Governors Island into a public park and cultural center. Guild members and artists from Denmark, Germany, Sweden, Switzerland, Russia, China, and Turkey filled the Nolan Park area of the island and two floors of Building 20 with artworks. The work of over 60 artists was on display, including large-scale outdoor sculpture, indoor sculpture, video, performance, and installation. The exhibition was curated by Sculptors Guild president Jerelyn Hanrahan.

4heads

The 4heads collective took over Building 114 on the island and created the First Annual Governors Island Art Fair in September and October, enabling over 40 artists to exhibit their work throughout the historic building. The fair brought both art lovers and art collectors to the island.

Punk Island

On Saturday, June 21, Make Music New York transformed Governors Island into a punk paradise. Over 75 bands appeared on 12 stages scattered around the island, with six bands performing on the ferry. The 1980s punk band Reagan Youth headlined the main-stage lineup. Punk Island was just one part of Make Music New York, which occurred simultaneously with similar festivities in more than 300 cities around the world. In New York, this year's edition also included more than a dozen block parties around the city, and various outdoor concerts.

FIGMENT

FIGMENT, which began in 2006 as a picnic and grew to a one-day participatory arts event in 2007, returned to the island with an even greater infusion of energy and artwork in 2008. Over 10,000 people came to the three-day event to participate in FIGMENT, which drew the largest attendance to the island of any single event in its history as a leisure destination. FIGMENT strives to provide an open forum for artists, helps build a creative community and fosters participatory and public art. A broad spectrum of arts are represented, including sculpture, performance, music, installation, dance, costuming and activities. FIGMENT will always be free and open to the public.

This year, in addition to the three-day festival, FIGMENT also sponsored a number of longer-term projects on the island, including the Emergence gallery show in Building 14, Voyeur (an exhibition of photographs from the FIGMENT event), also in Building 14, and the City of Dreams Mini-Golf Course, a 9-hole miniature golf course, in which each golf hole was designed by a different artist.

2009 and beyond

This flurry of culture is only the beginning of the evolution of Governors Island as a special home for the arts within New York City. In 2009, the island will host an artists studio program. Creative Time is planning to return to curate an exhibition. FIGMENT will return and likely be bigger than ever, with plans to expand the City of Dreams Mini-Golf Course, as well. It is clear that together, we are building something very important for the arts on this small island at the geographic center of New York City, one of the important nodes center of the arts world in our global community.



image © Tais Mellillo

Olafur Eliasson's 'Waterfall' by the ferry landing at Governors Island, Creative Time presents David Byrne's 'Playing the Building' in the historic Battery Maritime Building, Anakin Koenig Airways 'Braclet' at FIGMENT* 2008, and Andy Liu sculpture with IN-SITE by the Sculptures Guild on Governors Island (left to right).



CURATORS AND CORE TEAM

Johan Kritzingler - Curator

Joyce Manalo - Curator

Elke Dehner - Curator

Audrey Boguchwal - Volunteer & Academic Curator

David Koren - Executive Producer

Kate Raudenbush - Advisor



ARTISTS AND COLLECTIVES

Anne Arden McDonald

artcodex

Asha Ganpat

Avant Car Guard

Barend de Wet / Douglas Gimberg / Christian Nerf

Chris Jordan

Damon Hamm

Erik Fabian

Eugenia Yu

Friendly Falcons & Their Friend the Snake

G-77

Jason Van Anden / Nat Hawks / David Liatti

John Krill

John Walter

Michael Alan

Monica Muller

Peripheral Media Projects

Pornj Diamond Cell

Sarah N. Phillips

Saviour Scraps

Tara Parsons

Tim & Martin Dockery

Triangle Project

Urban Homesteading Project



Anne Arden McDonald, 'Layered, Buoyed, Tethered, Barely', multiple installation / detail views

ANNE ARDEN MCDONALD

"Layered, Buoyed, Tethered, Barely", 2008

Cyanotypes, fabric, and plumb bobs

Site specific installation with various dimensions

Cyanotypes from contact prints of Victorian childrens' dresses, doll dresses, lace, paper, and hair fill the ceiling to create an environment of delicacy. Plumb bobs contributes to the duality between weight and weightlessness. The installation references the importance of an era and general nostalgia.

Viewers are welcome to enjoy mood of the room, sit on pillows and draw on the paper covered floor, and scattered sketch pads. A dress suspended in the air invites viewers to crawl underneath it. The plumb bobs also function as a drawing tool. Viewers can gently move the string and let momentum draw for them.

CURATOR: THIS WORK CONTINUES WITH A LARGER THEME IN YOUR WORK THAT DEALS WITH IDEAS AROUND THAT OF FLIGHT AND FREEDOM. THE DRESS YOU HAVE CONSTRUCTED IS SUSPENDED OFF THE FLOOR AND ALL THE CYANOTYPE PRINTS ARE MOUNTED TO THE UPPER WALLS AND CEILING. CAN YOU ELABORATE A LITTLE ON YOUR FASCINATION WITH THESE THEMES IN RELATION TO THIS INSTALLATION AT EMERGENCE?

Artist: You're right—I have done 15 years of self portraits that were based around themes of flying and not being able to fly, and transcending other bodily limitations. This evolved into a series of plastic camera images that were mostly about floating and rising and falling, and this theme seems to creep into many things that I do, in one way or another. In the installation at Emergence, I was trying to set up a tension between things that were weightless and weighted, fragile and stronger, mostly in the dress and the plumb bobs—the "sky" made of the blue cyanotypes gave a space for the dress to rise into. For me, flight is always a symbol for freedom, for rising out of the weight and limitations of the body, and moving from what is to what might be.

ENCOURAGING THE PARTICIPANTS TO 'CRAWL UNDERNEATH' A DRESS MIGHT ALLUDE TO A SEXUAL PROPOSITION. IS THIS A CORRECT INFERENCE OF THE SUBJECT? PLEASE CAN YOU PROVIDE US WITH A LITTLE INSIGHT INTO YOUR APPROACH?

My intention was to make a private space inside of the public space, to enclose the viewer with fabric details that they would experience from a very close vantage point, and light them from behind so that they would become warmer and more luminous. I thought of the space as more childlike than sexual, crawling under some giant hoopskirt, but everyone would see it differently.

THE CYANOTYPES THAT YOU INSTALLED ON THE CEILINGS HAVE REPRESENTATIONS OF A SMALL DRESS. IT WAS REVEALED TO ME WHEN AT YOUR STUDIO THAT YOU USED A NUMBER OF OTHER OBJECTS TO ASSEMBLE THESE IMAGES OF THE DRESSES. CAN YOU TALK TO US A LITTLE ABOUT THE PROCESS AND MATERIALS USED?

Cyanotype is an antique contact printing process, like a Victorian blueprint, so to make them I coated large sheets of watercolor paper with an emulsion, hung them to dry, and contact printed them in sunlight. I made two types of cyanotypes and hung them together—one was an image made from contact printing actual vintage doll and children's dresses, the other used objects collaged together to make the image of a dress. The objects I used were things like layers of paper, feathers, fabric, seeds, lace, broken eggshells, cotton, twigs, onion skin, etc.

artcodex

Glen Einbinder, Mike Estabrook, Brian Higbee, Vandana Jain, Ernest Concepcion, Dormafe Baluyos-Fox, Dorothy Royle
"The War Show: Im/Migration of Species", 2008

Soil, fluorescent light bulbs, seeds, water, and small plastic bags

Site specific installation with various dimensions

The main aspect of our project is a "plant war" between native and non-native seedlings of Governors Island. Visitors are encouraging to create a parallel exhibition/war in the natural world of the city. Visitors are advised to "vote" for either the native or the non-native plants by taking the appropriate packet.

Rows of seed packets are provided to the audience to take and plant them in vacant lots. Depending on the heritage of the seeds inside, the packets will contain either a kraft or a white paper that has instructions on planting the seeds. Underneath each packet is a symbol, adding an element of chance and fun to the participation.

FROM A PHILOSOPHICAL POINT OF VIEW, WHAT WAS THE NATURE OF WAR BETWEEN THE NATIVE AND NON-NATIVE PLANTS AND THE IMPORTANCE OF ITS SIMULATION?

For Governors Island, we were required to develop a project that would be participatory, that would comment on the island's history, and that would require very minimal installation.

The Island was expanded from its original shape in 1912, with landfill from the excavation of the Lexington Ave Subway line forming the southern half of the Island. We decided to expand on this idea of original vs. addition to the more general notion of native vs. non-native. Im/migration of the Species was superficially a battle of native and non-native seedlings fighting for survival in a planterbox created in the shape of Governors Island. The native plants were heavily planted on the original side of the island while the non-native seeds were planted on the landfilled section of the island. The two areas were separated by miniaturized, handmade barbed wire.

However, "native", a term that is neutral in ecological contexts, becomes loaded when used in a political context. In colonial days, it was used to refer to the indigenous populations of colonized lands. These days, "native" is often used to distinguish between those born in the United States from those who have immigrated. These varied contexts and shades of meaning hint at the tears in the rhetoric. Who defines the indigenous state of plants in a particular region or country? Why do we need to maintain a static version of the plants as they were circa 1700? How is this desire for a "pure" natural environment linked to the increasing devastation of our ecosystem? Who is more native, a Native American, a Native New Yorker, or an immigrant who came through Ellis Island? How does one enforce static populations and impermeable borders in an increasingly mobile world? What is the ultimate meaning of native in a globalized context?

AT THE END OF THE EXHIBITION, DID YOU EXPECT THE PLANTS TO SURVIVE OR THRIVE? WHAT CAN BE REFLECTED UPON THIS OUTCOME?

As the nature of the work was experimental, we had no idea what to expect from the end of the show. For the first month or so, the plants were growing furiously. By the 7th week, we had a clear winner, a non-native bean vine that had climbed all the way to the top and over!! At the end of the show, two weeks later, we were quite stunned by the death of every single plant. The only survivor was mushroom, one of many that had appeared over the course of the project. We proclaimed the death due to root rot, resulting from poor soil drainage and lack of adequate ventilation. If this project is a forecast for humanity, then a sole member of an alien species will outlast us all on our ruined planet.

WILL YOU CONTINUE WITH YOUR "WAR SHOW" SERIES? IF SO, DO YOU FEEL THIS PIECE SEQUENTIALLY BUILDS FROM PREVIOUS SERIES? IF NOT, WHAT WILL YOUR NEXT SHOW BE ABOUT?

The War Show is based on the idea of one group of artists attacking/invading/battling/dueling another group of artists from a different city. Since the nature of the project is experimental and the exhibition is based on the interaction of the two parties, it is difficult to predict the nature of the final show. Im/migration of the Species involved was an atypical War Show because the human participants were only vectors for the native and non-native plants, who were the real soldiers in the show. Also, most War Shows do not end with a 100% infantry loss.

We are continually looking for artist-run spaces in other cities to host the next War Show. On the table are some spaces in Montreal and Philadelphia. Please feel free to get in touch if your artist collective would like to defend your city against some Brooklyn art marauders.



artcodex, 'The War Show: im/Migration of Species', multiple installation / detail views taken at different periods over 9 weeks





Asha Ganpat, 'They Know All About Us', multiple installation / details views



ASHA GANPAT

"They Know All About Us", 2008

Red light, paper, and motion sensor

Site specific installation (under 4 separate radiators)

A series of installations will be hidden and only when triggered by human proximity will it be released to the viewer. The "they" in the title refer to the miniature watchers being caught in the act. Their cover is blown. Now "we" know about "them" as well.

When the viewer steps into the proximity of the motion sensor, they trip the switch and turn on a light which illuminates the floor beneath the radiator. Initially it will just seem like jagged light, but upon closer inspection, shadows become apparent.

YOU HAVE CHOSEN A VERY UNIQUE PLACEMENT FOR YOUR CONTRIBUTION TO EMERGENCE AND THE PIECE WAS A GREAT DISCOVERY FOR THOSE WHO VENTURED TO LOOK UNDER THE RADIATOR. CAN YOU ELABORATE A LITTLE ABOUT HOW YOU CAME TO DECIDE ON THIS PARTICULAR PLACEMENT FOR YOUR PIECE?

I have been hiding my art for several years now. More specifically, I like to hide lights in places. It comes from my attempt to get the viewer to explore the exhibition space in a similar manner to the way I experienced the space, before art, when only an empty architectural space of potential existed. "They Know All About Us" was inspired from numerous directions: the lady in the radiator from "Eraserhead", a book called The Indian in the Cupboard, a cartoon called "The Littles", and a tale about the Native Americans who inhabited Governor's Island before it was "bought" by the Dutch. I do not believe in ghosts, but I sometimes wish they did exist. This piece was a small attempt to resurrect/invent some ghosts.

'THEY KNOW ALL ABOUT US' EXPLORES A SITUATION OF BEING 'CAUGHT IN THE ACT' AND OF WITNESSING THE EXPOSURE OF THESE FICTIONAL CHARACTERS. THE WORK SEEMS TO SUGGEST A SITUATION IN WHICH THE PARTICIPANT IS AN INVITED VOYEUR. CAN YOU PLEASE PROVIDE US WITH SOME INSIGHT INTO YOUR APPROACH IN SETTING UP THIS SCENARIO?

One of my more light-hearted and playful works, this piece allows the viewer to catch imaginary miniature watchers in their act of watching. They are the voyeurs and the viewer is the unsuspecting watchee. After the switch is tripped, the light comes on, exposing the little characters. They freeze and do not move (because they are paper, of course!), much like animals in the forest do when they do not want to be noticed. And just like the animals in the forest, it is often too late. They are caught, exposed.

YOU WORK A LOT WITH INTERACTIVE SCULPTURES AND INSTALLATIONS. WHAT IS IT THAT APPEALS TO YOU ABOUT WORKING IN A PARTICIPATORY FIELD OF ARTISTIC PRACTICE?

I aim to include the viewer in my work to the extent that it would not make sense without them. In this case, if not for the viewer, the light would never turn on and the little paper silhouettes would never be found. Generally, I find interactive and participatory work vastly more intriguing than works which require the viewer to only witness that the work has been created. In my work, I try to let the work be recreated for and by the viewer every time it is viewed. My conceptual interactive pieces are most easily viewed as sociological experimental situations which I create with the intent to learn more about my fellow human beings.

AVANT CAR GUARD

Zander Blom, Jan-Henri Booyens & Michael MacGarry

"AVANT CAR GUARD at the crossroads of Critical Acclaim and Commercial Success II", 2008

Site specific installation with various dimensions

The two works made specifically for the project talk in a reflexive way about the environmental impact our involvement has had on the project. They make honest statements about how we can reduce our environmental impact and they also comment upon the relational dynamics between first and third world contexts. These statements are coupled with a sideways homage to Johannesburg as the New York City of Africa.

To participate in this project in New York City, one member of our three-member visual art collective - AVANT CAR GUARD from Johannesburg, South Africa had to fly to the United States. Financially, the most cost-effective route is via Dubai with Emirates Airlines. Conversely, as the graphic demonstrates, this is also one of the most environmentally damaging pathways due to the inefficiency of the route and the extended distance traveled, with the total carbon footprint for the return flight being 4.013 tonnes of carbon monoxide released into the atmosphere.

The Breadfruit (*Treculia Africanain*) native to tropical Africa, is a broad-leaved tree with large greenish to brownish-green, round fruits that have a white, fibrous pulp. Whilst varieties found in the South Pacific remain a staple food, the African strain is less important as a food crop. It has also been widely planted in tropical regions elsewhere. It was collected and distributed by Lieutenant William Bligh as one of the botanical samples collected by HMS Bounty in the late 18th century, on a quest for a cheap high-energy food source for British slaves in the West Indies. It is high in starch and is seldom eaten raw. Unable to tolerate frost, the tree has not been successfully grown in the United States, even in southernmost Florida. To offset our personal carbon footprint of 4.013 tonnes of CO₂, and making our participation in this important project carbon neutral, AVANT CAR GUARD will plant six of these broad-leaved breadfruit trees, *Treculia Africanain*, in the Botanical Gardens in Durban, South Africa. Documentation of this process will manifest on www.avantcarguard.com. We encourage participants in this event to actively consider the carbon footprint incurred producing their work for exhibition and for visitors traveling to view the works to also consider theirs. By extension, to create awareness to the broader view of calculating what impact their lives in general have at a carbon emission level. We encourage visitors to use the following online tools to measure their carbon dioxide emissions, gauge ways to reduce those emissions, and then offset the remainder by planting trees. Active dialogue with us in South Africa is encouraged, so please tell us how you have reduced your carbon footprint:

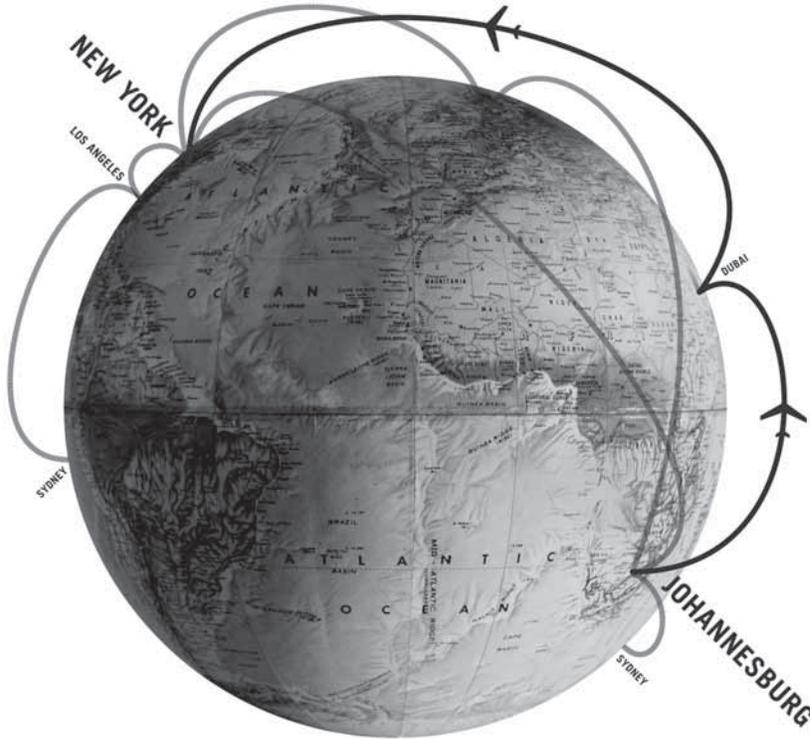
www.conservationfund.org

www.climatecrisis.net

Contact us at: info@avantcarguard.com

www.avantcarguard.com

AVANT CAR GUARD



A ROUND TRIP FROM:
Johannesburg (JNB) to New York (JFK) via Dubai (DXB)
Total carbon footprint for flights = **4.013 TONNES OF CO²**
29828 MILES



A ROUND TRIP FROM:
Johannesburg (JNB) to New York (JFK) via Amsterdam (AMS)
Total carbon footprint for flights = **3.428 TONNES OF CO²**
18534 MILES



A ROUND TRIP FROM:
Johannesburg (JNB) to New York (JFK)
Total carbon footprint for flights = **2.957 TONNES OF CO²**
15948 MILES



A ROUND TRIP FROM:
Johannesburg (JNB) to Sydney (LHR), to Los Angeles (LAX), to New York (JFK)
Total carbon footprint for flights = **6.228 TONNES OF CO²**
33622 MILES



To participate in this project in New York City, one member of our three-member visual art collective - AVANT CAR GUARD from Johannesburg, South Africa had to fly to the United States. Fortunately the most eco-effective route is via Dubai with Emirates Airlines. Conversely, as the graphic above demonstrates, this is also one of the most environmentally damaging due to the southwest route and extended in-flight hours, with the total carbon footprint for the return flight being 4.013 tonnes of carbon monoxide released into the atmosphere. The Breadfruit (Toumou African) native to tropical Africa, is a broad-based tree with large greenish to brownish-green, round fruits that have a white, fibrous pulp. Which varieties found in the South Pacific remain a staple food, the African strain is less important as a food crop. It has also been widely planted in tropical regions elsewhere. It was collected and distributed by Lieutenant William Brough as one of the botanical samples collected by HMS Beatty in the late 18th century, on a quest for a cheap high-energy food source for British ships in the West Indies. It is high in starch and its carbon value is low. Unlike its tropical fruit, the tree has not been successfully grown in the United States, even in southwestern Florida. To offset our personal carbon footprint of 4.013

tonnes of CO², and making our participation in this important project carbon neutral, AVANT CAR GUARD will plant six of these broad-based breadfruit trees, 'Tropical Airtraps', in the Botanical Gardens in Durban, South Africa. Documentation of this process will manifest on www.avantcarguard.com in the coming weeks. We encourage participants in this quest to actively consider the carbon footprint incurred during their work for exhibition and for visitors traveling to view the works to also consider theirs. By extension, to create awareness to the broader view of calculating what impact their lives in general have on a carbon emission level. We encourage visitors to this project to use the following online tools to measure their carbon dioxide emissions, gauge ways to reduce those emissions, and then offset the remainder by planting trees. Active dialog with us in South Africa is encouraged, as please tell us how you have reduced your carbon footprint on the time following your end to this project.

www.consumersfund.org www.climaticrisis.net info@avantcarguard.com

AVANT CAR GUARD at the Crossroads of Critical Acclaim & Commercial Success II



AVANT CAR GUARD, '...at the Crossroads of Critical Acclaim and Commercial Success II, poster (left) and installation views

BAREND DE WET, DOUGLAS GIMBERG & CHRISTIAN NERF

"Acting on Orders", 2008

American citizens were offered the opportunity to tell these South African artists what to do. The subsequent acts exhibited on <http://actingonorders.blogspot.com> respond to direct and indirect orders.

Barend de Wet, Doug Gimberg and Christian Nerf discuss acting on orders with Johan Kritzinger, Dr Nuno Sacramento, Ronan Xavier, Ruth Sacks, Samuel Herzog, Takuro Kotaka, Ron T Beck, Francis Burger and Sebastian Charilaou.

Johan Kritzinger: We were not expecting the types of responses to the orders that you presented. Please can you provide a little insight into the interpretation you have taken with regards to the commands that you received?

Douglas Gimberg: Just because you're saying 'please' doesn't mean that you haven't just given us another command.

Sebastian Charilaou: I think you fucknuckles have been 'acting out' versus 'acting on'. Giving in to the desires that are forbidden by your Super egos and yet desired by your Ids. Naughty boys!

Douglas Gimberg: Insurgent – "A person who rises in active revolt against authority; a rebel, a revolutionary" (*The New Shorter Oxford English Dictionary* 1993). The definition appears to have changed somewhat since 1993 though. Subsequent to 2001 the term has been used consistently in the media to describe the people fighting against the US army's invasions in the various Middle Eastern "conflicts" comprising "the [new] long war". Those fighting against the US in the context of the "Global War on Terrorism" cannot be insurgents because the term by the above definition implies that the US forces have a legitimate authority over those citizens of the invaded states.

Ron T Beck: Forward planning and several open supply lines will always facilitate a smooth transition of power. In most cases a deflection strategy at the outset will lure the opposition forces into a series of needless engagements. While this is in progress you can protect the specific brand equity of the geographies in question. Maintaining value while occupying the attentions of the opponent defense systems. What has changed so much since Rogers took over is that war is now no longer 'the continuation of politics by other means' (as Carl von Clausewitz suggested all those years ago) but rather an extension of commerce as a result of structural necessity.

SC: What is rather interesting is that the Wikipedia definition, which has been updated subsequent to 2004, is rather comprehensive and describes tactics and methodologies that are not at all dissimilar to those of "terrorists", immediately stripping them of any of the righteousness associated with "revolution". The term is not actually one that should be used as a descriptor outside of the context of a civil war or coup d'état, in this instance the implication of the term is that the Iraqi's are illegitimate in resisting US occupation and brutality.

Christian Nerf: When one tells someone what to do one has already a picture in mind and perhaps a little prejudice is forming.

Barend de Wet: No expectations make for better reward.

Samuel Herzog: Big expectations though seem more appropriate when one is thinking about New York. The City represents somehow THE big expectation since the time of the early colonials.

DG: People like rewards.

DG: There are many different kinds of apples.

CN: The fact that you [looking at Douglas] are 14 years younger than me and I am 14 years younger than you [looking at Barend] played a major role in our decision-making, yes?

DG: I have a problem with authority at the best of times.

DG: I love operating within hierarchical structures because one needn't accept responsibility for any of one's actions! Take that Barend!

BdW: haha

SH: But the first decisions Americans make has already to do with some alienation: If one decides that he is a first world citizen - than he tells himself to some extent what do be (and ergo what to do). Its not only a world classification - it's first of all a self classification. And it's a heavy decision - like a boxer who decides that from now on he will win all the fights - imagine the total panic when he feels his losing power. Losing a fight is one thing - if your life concept is threatened that is something else.

SC: Howzit Takuro. Eish, I hear you had a car accident while travelling with Potato?

Takuro Kotaka: Now, me and Potato are in Namibia. Moving by hitchhiking. We did some troubles. Our cars taken crash accident. And, everyone was injured. I was safely, but lost the Potato. Then, We were looking for Potato, and We are able to found the Potato. I am very glad.

DG: And I was lying about my age. I'm really 33.

DG: In 1986 Norman Borlaug established the World Food Prize (no comment about the motives) to recognise individuals who have improved the quality, quantity or availability of food around the world, do you think that Takuro should be eligible?

Tom Waits: Once Kissinger said: "we have no friends, America only has interests"...

CN: Yes, we were very conscious of the divide between the Americans and us when we formulated this interaction. Americans see themselves as first world citizens and find themselves in the enviable position of deciding who is third world.

Ronan Xavier: Standing in the face of a primal urge will get you hurt. Moreover, if you roll over like a dog you wake up with globalization. Screw the meek!

RTB: In a world afraid there are fewer escape routes. The screen, flickering in the corner of your lounge 24 hours a day, has been colonised to become the primary mechanism for delivering instantaneous and globalised fear. These screens are also the means for controlling vast geographic tracts in a most efficient manner, because they compress the geography of their broadcast space. This geography is inhabited by disbursed and frightened individuals either contained within the perimeter or outside of it. Those within the perimeter, the citizens, have a strong need to feel safe and are protected by a myriad of systems. The ones who dwell beyond the perimeter either physically or theoretically are regarded as others. They are apart from the inclusiveness of the perimeter and they exist in a zone where everything has been outsourced or 'EXCLUDED from multipolar internationality...' (p109 Virilio, P. City Of Panic. 2007. Berg, New York)

Francis Burger: I'm not so sure, I don't know how seriously you mean that but in any case the idea of a 'primal urge' is ridiculous, I mean who positions the primal, maybe Barend?

BdW: hihhi

DG: Some of my best friends are meek. Hey, Barend, are you okay?

FB: Exactly, it's yesterday's news. But on the subject of first and third world, I'd have to agree with Christian, although I don't think that the desire to designate a position on the podium is restricted to American citizens. I mean, people who dig in bins are also seen as victims by those on the upper floors, it's the same sort of sympathetic gesture that keeps the other at a safe distance, like people who throw sweets at kids who beg at car windows. I wouldn't say that the first world is solely responsible for sustaining the distinction either. The whole thing relies on a mutual performance, concessions from both sides, we put flies on our eyeballs and sit in the sun, we do the jig. The first and third world is there for them and us to maintain a fantasy, both psychic and economic, that's supposed to be good for all of us.

[Silence]

OK maybe not flies, sorry, I'll just listen.

CN: Hahaha, the fox and the flies on our eyes. Things in our collaborations got more complex once they included signs even though they are not essential reading matter to engage the work.

DG: Is Barend ill? Why was he saying 'hihihi...' just now?
CN: Exactly, check out what went down with the Mental Pictures installation.
[laughter]
RX: Mental Pictures? Oh...right.
DG: They're similar to metal pictures, only they're different.
CN: We do translate messages in a different way add to this all the mumbo-jumbo connected with us Africans it would seem obvious that we would envision things differently. Maybe?
DG: Something that was obviously uncommon.
SH: I like the word "mumbo-jumbo" - pronounced like a German word it's very picturesque.
RTB: A degree of opacity may always be a prerequisite vis a vis the unified strategic direction of the combatant forces; their operation under unified command; and for their integration into an efficient team of land, naval, and air forces.
FB: Desire might be a constant force, but it's supply that produces demand, that's Andrea Fraser, paraphrasing Lacan.
Belle and Sebastian: But if you are feeling sinister
Go off and see a minister
He'll try in vain to take away the pain of being a hopeless unbeliever...
CN: [turning to Dr Sacramento] Thanks [for the Jagermeister]. Jacques [Coetzer] said it's so hard to be a middle-class guy. How did things work out in Scotland for them and you all?
Nuno Sacramento: I tell you what. Being middle class is hard, but being a Portuguese-Mozambiquean middle class curator in Scotland is much, much harder!!! Is Scotland a middle ground between ZA and the US? Can you pass the me the bottle of Jager, please?
BdW: sigh
CN: Losing control?
BdW: hoho
CN: Ja, descending into an alternate thinking doing state, embracing some god-free force to direct us. Does it mean we are out of control?
BdW: yoyo
[laughter]
NS: Sorry guys, I came into the discussion quite late. Can you please tell me WHO IS YOUR CLIENT? Really?
JK: The curators were a little surprised that the orders have been withheld from the public. Do you ever plan to release these commands?
DG: You are assuming that we actually make plans.
DG: There are just so many of them. Every time you turn on the tv, radio, look out the window...
BdW: either or neither nor not only but also.
CN: Never.
RTB: Orders may be delivered down a continual supply chain or by asymmetrical mechanisms. In all cases the integrity of the communications needs to be authenticated by means of reverse triangulation.
DG: Are you sure we shouldn't call a doctor or something for Barend?
DG: yes, never, what would be the value of the information?
CN: On second thought everything is for sale in America...
[laughter]
...so make us an offer!
BdW: hehe
[laughter]
SH: You could also sell some third-world-rights (like the right to loose a fight).
DG: Cash only, please.
BdW: People must do what they want.
NS: By the Way (BdW). Can you tell me who your client is?
SH: Maybe you try to FREE America - that's a nice idea.
DG: So long as it's very close to what we want too.
DG: Or what somebody else tells them to do. "Satan told me to kill the children". The parents, of course, blame Slipknot.
CN: Maybe Jesus told them? Anyways we have withheld all of the real evidence regarding our escape to Robben Island.
DG: Ah, good choice of words there, it implies that we actually did it! Excellent.
NS: I am sorry to say the only time you were to Robben Island was in a

tourist boat. Not on that sculpture.
BdW:
DG: Fucking hell! Now he's spewing full stops! Quick, we're got to get him some help.
JK: Your participation in Emergence relied heavily on the use of internet technology to interact / present the work. The internet allows for global communication and information sharing but below the surface there is always the challenge of defining authenticity and the spreading of 'mis-information'. How have these challenges influenced your work?
DG: Aaaaah, technology. Technology and Progress, don't they just go hand in hand, they certainly both hinge on communication. Better lives for all ahead! A friend of mine, Inge Papp, recently made the mistake of saying that the truth was what separated people from animals. Yes I said, the difference between the two is that only the humans can lie.
CN: Wiki says Misinformation is wrong or inaccurate information. It is distinguished from disinformation by motive - misinformation is simply erroneous, while disinformation, in contrast, is intended to mislead.
SH: Some years ago I tried to put an article about a fictitious island (a old project of mine) on Wiki. It began with the sentence: "Santa Lemusa is a fictitious island..." The Wiki-community discussed the case. Some found a fictitious island had no relevance on Wiki - others found that it was a kind of misinformation. And two said that I should simply leave out the word "fictitious" and try again.
DG: The line from the movie V for Vendetta springs to mind: "artists use lies to tell the truth while politicians use lies to cover the truth up."
BdW: Authentic and unauthentic mixed.
RTB: Well you should never believe your own mythology, this tends to be a common tactical error in these kinds of situations.
CN: The experiment was conceived to come alive online.
DG: Like the porn industry.
BdW: Where does truth begin and end?
DG: It is all in the motive.
CN: Anyways, back to JK's question of defining authenticity.
David Byrne and Brian Eno: This groove is out of fashion...
DG: Except for all that stuff that we accidentally leaked all over the Internet that was the gospel truth.
BdW: mumble mumble
NS: Sorry for being so persistent. I see you guys received orders from afar. Some you followed closely and to some others you said 'Get the fuck!'. This is a freedom that the Guild artists of the medieval and academy artists of the renaissance times never had. They had to use very very subtle symbolism to take the piss out of their masters and clients. The church and the aristocracy of those days were contemporary US of today. All powerful or at least they thought so... while it lasted! As time went by, and with the appearance of photography, depiction of clients did not really fall in the hands of artists anymore. They had to re-invent painting, which was by now a clientless art form. One of the people in charge of that, painted with light (like photography), isolated himself in France, chopped his ear off (no Belle and Sebastian for Vincent) and drank himself to death (No Jagermeister, Absinth it was!). He was responsible for the clientless art of the 20th Century. The autonomous art that hid itself behind walls in white galleries...
Meanwhile two wars and the large advance of industry joined creativity and client in the emerging art of Design. Americans and Germans were amazing at it. At the end of last century this was the scenario: a decadent but clever clientless art and an often basic and streamlined art of designed client consumption. You guys are somewhere in between and this marks a time, even a shift in paradigm. You receive orders like medieval and renaissance artists and deliver them as you wish and according to your own principles like little Van Goghs. What are you really, and who the fuck is your client?
Now go make a fire and ignore the questions that really matter. And pass me the absin... Jagermeister again!
CN: OK, shall we make a fire?
BdW: Yes please.
SC: I am going home to watch Dr Zhivago. Do you remember the line 'No doubt they will sing in tune after the revolution'?
TK: Potato and I will come with.
DG: Shall I go buy the meat and some hot dog rolls?
DB&BE: These beats are 20 years old...

CHRIS JORDAN

"Hectagon Heliograph Strategies", 2008

Projector, mirrors and camera

Site specific installation (2nd floor backroom and backyard)

This installation attempts to juxtapose an historical environment with the political disparity found in consumerism and warfare. The work highlights the connection to the site's military background, while fragmenting the modern day struggle surrounding the concept of land and environment we live in. Broken mirrors (found objects) with aerial projections and maps of Governors Island fill the room, and an auxiliary piece in the backyard captures sunrays that reflect into the backroom.

The piece incorporates environmental projections that appear constantly in motion and engages with individuals in the installation space by projecting on all surfaces, instead of the traditional media 4:3 box. This piece aims to reverse the consumer role by reflecting and refracting the viewer's movement and physical presence. Viewers essentially become embedded in the work through timelapse recordings.

FOR HEPTAGON HELIOGRAPH STRATEGIES YOU INCORPORATED AN UNPREDICTABLE FACTOR INTO YOUR PIECE: SUNLIGHT. WERE YOU CONCERNED ABOUT THE WEATHER?

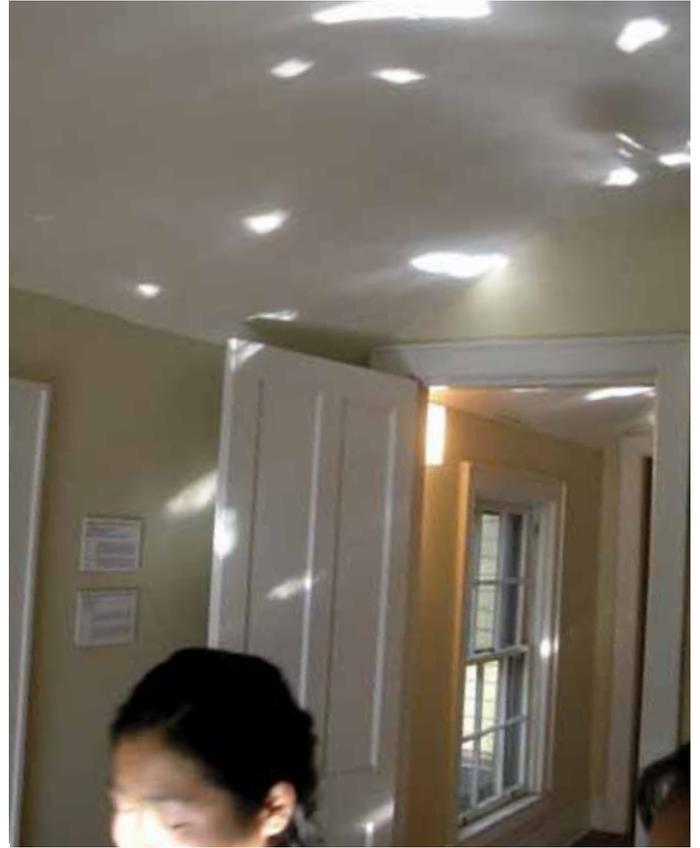
Sunlight was a big concern, definitely. The sun and our relationship with light is a primary thesis of the work. How sunlight is recorded, alongside people coming and going in the room, then projected on the room itself, was intended as a framing of nature and technology; material and virtual; transparent and opaque. The projector allows sunlight to become, as it so often is in our lives, a distinctly detached element. Having weather affect the work is essential then.

YOU COLLECTED TIMELAPSE IMAGES OF VISITORS, PROJECTED THEM BACK ONTO THEM AND COVERED THE WALLS IN MIRRORS. WITH THIS REVERSAL, OR RATHER EXPANSION OF THE VIEWERS' ROLE, WHAT WERE YOU SEDUCING YOUR AUDIENCE TO DO, FEEL OR EXPERIENCE?

The viewer, or 'user', as the web is altering our language to adopt, is presented with a neutral equation that, it's my hope, (s)he engages in on a meditative level. Watching the cumulative timelapse shows this praxis in the users as they experience the work, as well as the broader patterns of the sun and our individual connection with light.

IN SOME CULTURES, BREAKING A MIRROR IS BELIEVED TO BRING BAD LUCK - OR A CRACKED SOUL - FOR 7 YEARS. YOU USED BROKEN MIRRORS, WHICH YOU FOUND ON THE STREET. DO YOU SEE A CONNECTION BETWEEN MATERIAL WASTEFULNESS AND THE KILLING OF OUR SOULS?

The piece has for me a very environmental political undercurrent surrounding President Bush, and the seven years' of what I perceive as bad luck with this regime. By using mirrors that were gathered from my neighborhood, as well as all recycled technology and materials (the only thing purchased for this installation was some screws), the work highlights the need for artists and users to consume less, and reuse more. Because I live in Chinatown, the ethnic beliefs around mirrors as bad luck (Mai Jong parlors often throw mirrors away if someone has a losing streak at the tables), was very prevalent. The reflection of mirrors for me represents primarily personal introspection, which then unfolds into contemplation on consumption.



Chris Jordan, 'Hectagon Heliograph Strategies', installation views and video stills from the Helio Timelapse recorded in the room over the 9 weeks





Damon Hamm, 'Toy Piano (Stanley)' installation view (left), 'Toy Piano' (top right), 'Oscillating Coil' (middle right), and 'Bruxis' (Bottom right) details views

DAMON HAMM

1. *"Toy Piano (Stanley)"*, 2007 - Projector, mirrors and camera
2. *"Oscillating Coil"*, 2008 - Copper, wood, steel, electronics
3. *"Bruxis"*, 2002 - Wood, plaster, brass, aluminum, electronics

1. A child's toy piano is transformed into an interactive work aimed at adults that teaches binary counting by means of pattern repetition (i.e. "Simon Says").
2. The coil oscillates through harmonic resonance as one moves closer to the opening. Moving too far away or violating the rim of the coil disrupts the field, stopping the oscillations.
3. Bruxis responds to the presence of people. He waits for you to leave before grinding his teeth, stopping if you return. If interrupted before completing his routine, he becomes more agitated. The intention of this is to create an air of autonomy and engage in an interaction not entirely under the control of the viewer. Bruxis has 11 levels of annoyance, each increasing in intensity and varying in rhythm.

Bruxis Technical Statement: Damon Hamm created 'Bruxis' as a hybrid of both found and fabricated components. The main outer frame is part of a found object - a denture articulator, while the rest was fabricated from aluminum, brass, and plaster. At Bruxis' core is an embedded microcontroller, infrared range sensor, servo motor, and mechanical linkages.

YOU HAD THREE SCULPTURES IN THE EXHIBITION. ALL THREE OF THEM HAD AN ANTIQUE LOOK TO THEM, AND HAD SIMPLE CIRCUITRY AND INFRARED TECHNOLOGY. WHAT IMPRESSIONS IN THE PAST AND PRESENT INFLUENCED YOU TO CREATE THESE PIECES?

I have always been enamored with the elegant materials and treatments that natural history museums used to preserve and display antiquities. The deliberate effort and care involved in exhibiting these works gives them a sense of permanence and validity. I appropriate this aesthetic to imbue the objects with a historical weight that helps develop a mythology around the object's past. The intent is to lightheartedly flirt with people's expectations and perceptions of authenticity.

Another influence I would cite is the vaudevillian practice of demonstrating basic scientific and technological 'marvels' as spectacle. Only my pieces remove the emcee, letting people explore on their own. The interactions are intended to be slightly confounding and not fully transparent, retaining some of their mystery.

ALL THREE OF YOUR PIECES REQUIRE A LEVEL OF IMMEDIACY IN PARTICIPATION. HOW DID YOU ACCOUNT FOR DIFFERENT VARIATIONS OF HOW THEY WOULD INTERACT WITH YOUR PIECE? WHAT ARE COMMON THREADS BETWEEN THESE THREE PIECES?

The Emergence exhibit was an interesting experiment since there were so many factors at play. I usually like to employ a degree of subtlety and mystery. I want to reward viewers that express a stronger level of interest and curiosity with 'the secret' of the interaction. Bruxis starts to move slowly only after you start to leave. The coil reacts if you peer down into the center or move your hand over the core axis. The Toy Piano, however, has a long cultural heritage and very well known method of interaction. Press a brightly colored key, it responds in turn. From there, interpretations of what is going on and level of interest in 'solving the puzzle' varied. But there was certainly great satisfaction in the accessibility of the interaction. People knew basically what they were 'supposed' to do and they received an immediate response. With that barrier to entry gone, they were free to explore further - and many did.

Bruxis and the Oscillating coil do not leverage as much of an existing framework as a piano, so interacting with them requires more 'experimentation' from the viewer. In the context of the piano and the public nature of the exhibit, many people were expecting the other sculptures to also be tactile and immediately reactive. This not being the case, we needed to add additional protection to fragile pieces and provide brief instructions to help people engaging the art in the intended manner.

AFTER PARTICIPATING IN THIS EXHIBITION, WOULD YOU CONSIDER CONTRIBUTING YOUR WORK FOR OTHER AUDIENCE MEMBERS TO INTERACT WITH?

I really enjoyed watching the myriad of reactions and comments people make. Engaging people on such a direct experiential level makes me look forward to developing new ideas as well as exhibiting my current sculptures in many more venues in the future.

ERIK FABIAN

"No Rules: Governors Island Edition", 2008

Performance - Two chairs, small table, and set of rules

Duration varies

A simple imagination game of offense and defense. This game unveils a series of impending dooms that befall the City of New York, to which a series of bold counter attacks are carried out in the nick of time. It places the heroic Governors Island between beloved New York City and utter destruction.

"Two players pick either the role of IMPENDING DOOM or GOVERNORS ISLAND.

The IMPENDING DOOM player imagines (and describes aloud) a specific threat to New York City, and the GOVERNORS ISLAND player has one chance to save New York by imagining and describing aloud some defense. Play continues following this attack-and-defend pattern until one player mistakenly repeats themselves (and loses) or both players agree to stop and call the game a draw."

WHAT ELEMENTS OF A BOARD GAME INSPIRED YOU TO CREATE YOUR PIECE?

I try to think of games as a rather big idea that include things like card games and boardgames as well as sports and things more like parlor games. I like that games provide a rule structure for interaction and that games provide a culturally familiar means of shifting into make-believe scenarios. In the case of No Rules: Governors Island Edition, I like that there is a competitive drive that moves the game forward initially but that the game ultimately becomes this opportunity to get to know how someone else thinks.

WHAT EXPECTATIONS DID YOU HAVE OF YOUR AUDIENCE'S KNOWLEDGE, PERSONALITY, AND WILLINGNESS TO PARTICIPATE?

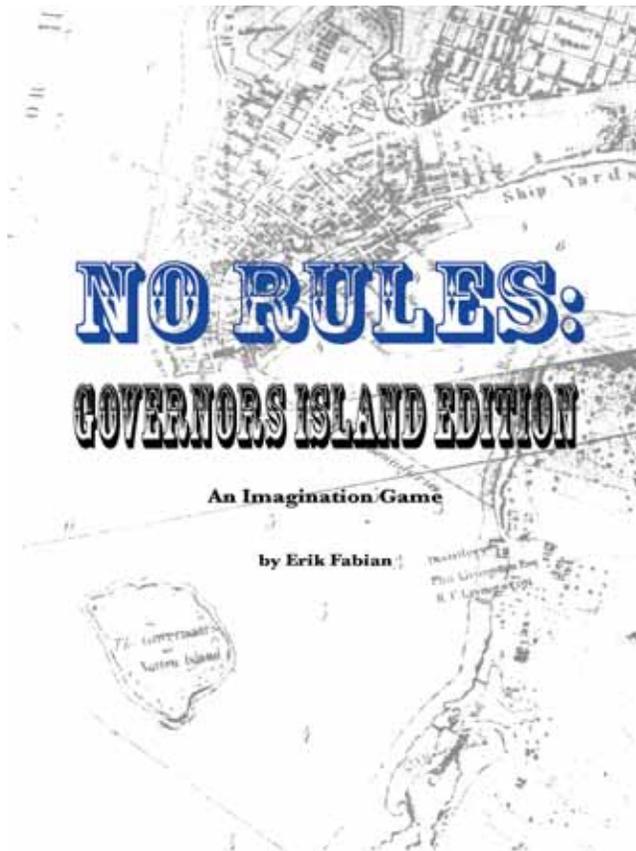
I assumed some folks would just jump right in, that some would need a nudge, and lots would walk on by. I think my assumptions influenced how I presented the game more than the creation of this variation of the game's rules. I am glad to have had chances to be there and play the game with the more reluctant players. I also assumed, that by placing chairs on a porch, I would snag some of those folks just looking for a chance to sit down. I think there is always someone at an art show who wants to have a seat.

YOUR PIECE DOES NOT DIRECTLY COMMUNICATE YOUR POLITICAL STANCE, WHY DID YOU CHOOSE TO BE SO DIPLOMATIC?

In the context of an interactive art show, it seems appropriate to encourage a conversation. I am comfortable if someone wants to venture a political interpretation of that choice. I assume people who actually played a game of No Rules: Governors Island Edition with me may have gotten a sense of how I think about politics as well. If that was the case I think I would be happy how the game is functioning.

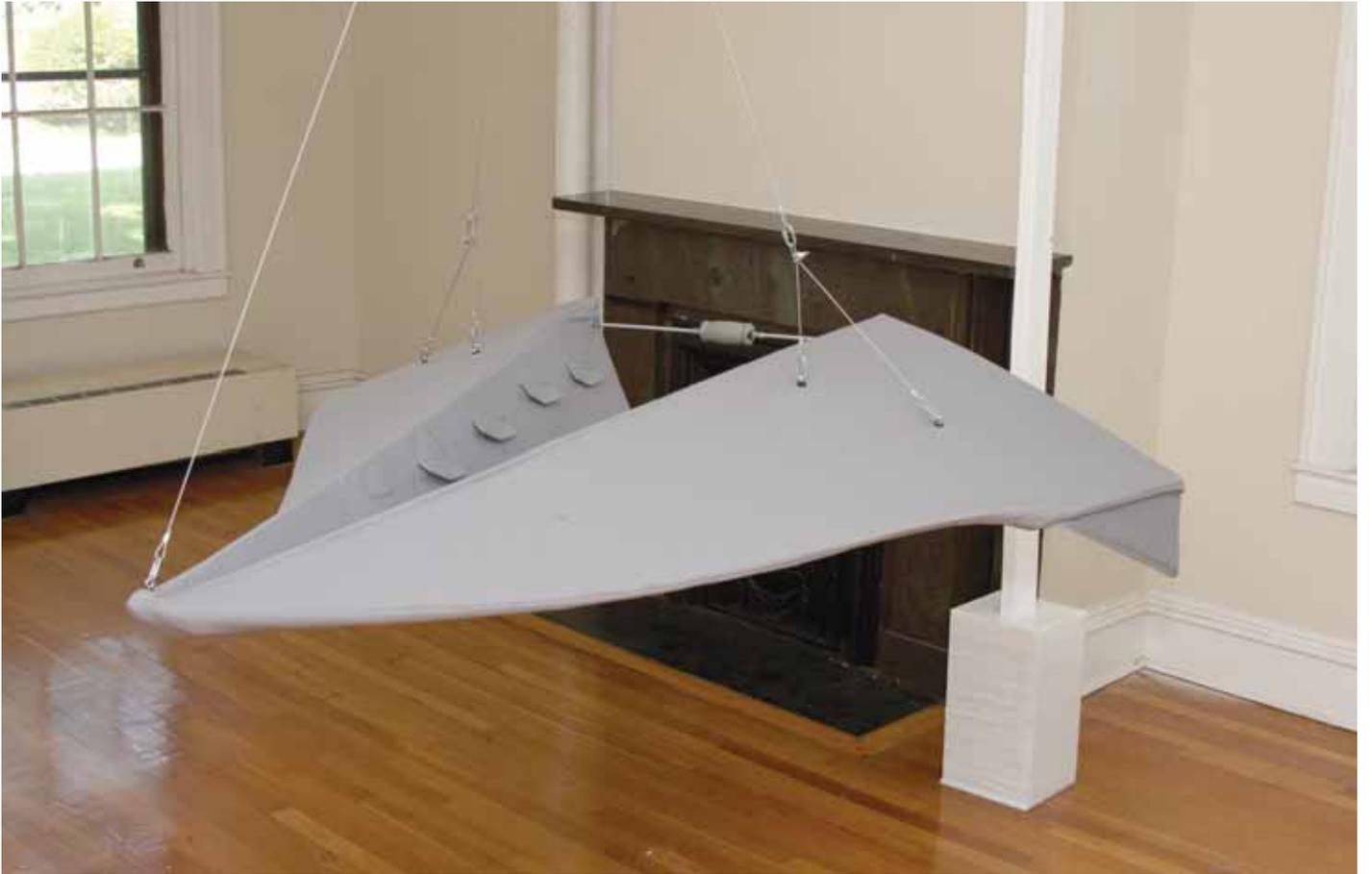
CAN YOU DESCRIBE THE BEST SIMULATION OF OFFENSE AND DEFENSE TACTICS THAT YOUR AUDIENCE DISPLAYED?

I think the best games are the ones where my opponent bravely jumped right in and was willing to make choices that were meaningful to them. As far as content, the games went all over the place...there were economic catastrophes and solutions; environmental tragedies (lots of tidal waves and viruses); magical events (force fields); war-like scenarios; miracles; emotional dramas (people so depressed they just stopped living); and one game that went raging off into comic book territory with a ultimate face off between figures from both the D.C. and Marvel universes.

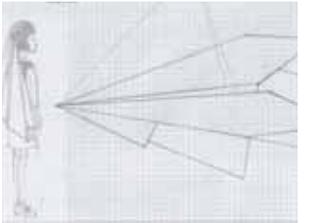


Eric Fabian, 'No Rules: Governors Island Edition', Rules card (above left), Installation view (bottom left) and performance views





Eugenia Yu, 'The Super 100 Aeroplane', multiple installation / details views, and artist illustration (far bottom right)



EUGENIA YU

"The Super 100 Aeroplane", 2008

Super 100 Wool fabric, batting, polycarbonate
60" x 48" x 36"

This fabric plane is made of Super 100 Wool, a high quality men's suiting fabric. It can be set in motion like a flying paper airplane—one that unfailingly returns to its origin to once again be propelled forward. There are welt pockets designed to carry supplies for the journey. This moves forward, backward, and returns to its origin to be repeated again representing the rhythm of change, exploration, and discovery. Take the handle and pull or push the plane. The piece will move with momentum in various directions and return to its original position.

THE SUPER 100 AEROPLANE PLAYS WITH THE IDEA OF FANTASY BUT THE MEDIUM SEEMS TO SHIFT THE MEANING TO A MORE SERIOUS OR PRACTICAL REALITY. THE JUXTAPOSITION OF THESE TWO CONFLICTING IDEAS FORM THE FOUNDATIONS OF THE IDEA, SO HOW DID YOUR EXPERIENCE OF GOVERNORS ISLAND INFORM THE FINAL WORK?

For the part of Governors Island, I imagined a way of traveling there; a flying device. And like my other works, it had to do with fabric, along with fantasy, reality, memory, engineering, tailoring. I wanted just to create a flying object as portable and familiar as clothing. Whether it was functional in real terms was not relevant. It cannot fly in a real sense, but it has no need to. Somehow I think it works on another level. Which is why I made it out of men's suiting fabric. There is something strange about such a disposable object like a paper airplane, made from something very fine and valuable such as men's suiting. The welt pockets and feather stitching seem obscure. I like thinking about our relationship to materials and the identity of objects.

YOUR WORK STRADDLES A THIN LINE BETWEEN FANTASY AND REALITY, PLEASE CAN YOU ELABORATE A LITTLE ON HOW YOU BUILD YOUR IDEAS AND WHERE THEY COME FROM?

I have moments when I'm in the process of waking up, or just falling asleep, when things are a bit blurry. Things make sense, but they also become distorted and surreal. For example, I'll think, "I'm going to wash the bathroom sink today", and then I'll think "oh no, I forgot to buy a toilet plunger so I won't be able to do it!" But we both know you don't use toilet plungers to clean sinks. That's where most of my work comes from. Not the sink, but from the surreal/real place that occurs often when you're a child and less often later on. It's all just imagination. But better now because I have a college degree.

IN YOUR ORIGINAL PROPOSAL, THE SUPER 100 WAS TO BE DESIGNED WITH STRAPS AND COULD BE TRANSPORTED ON ONES BACK. WILL THERE BE FUTURE EDITIONS THAT INCLUDE THE STRAPS OR WAS THAT ANOTHER COMPONENT OF THE 'FANTASTICAL' SIDE OF THE WORK?

I left the straps out for the exhibition because it might be distracting to the context. But one day, I would like to make hundreds of Super 100 Aeroplanes in all different fabrics and series. Some in suiting fabric and baby blanket fleece and sheer organdy. And they will have straps. I hope them to be as variable and common as all commercial things, and to be shown and used on human beings.

The Friendly Falcons and Their Friend the Snake

Jeff Kurosaki & Tara Pelletier

"The 10 penny hi top", 2008

Performance with papier-mâché animals, 40 minutes

A game show that encourages a competitive spirit, highlighted with imagination that focuses on having fun rather than on winning a prize. It is simultaneously an ode, a satire and a critique of the consequences of settling and the pursuit of happiness in colonial times, and as they still exist today.

Contestants of The 10 penny hi top will be chosen on a voluntary basis at the beginning of each show. They wear animal masks and play fun games. Give over to your imagination, where pig's butts will fly, nails will be tossed, and golden peanuts will be found.

WHAT INSPIRED AND CONTRIBUTED TO THE IDEA OF A GAME SHOW AS A CRITICAL ELEMENT OF YOUR PIECE?

We are interested in creating unique situations that initiate conversation through a shared experience. The game show is used as a platform to create a playful event where participants can readily immerse themselves into the alternate reality that we present them with. At the outset, we were inspired by the idea of making our own game that would encourage people to gather under an umbrella of spectacle, competition and inconsequential rules. The game show is a catalyst by which people can be motivated to lose their sense of self and be fully involved in their role as a contestant and/or audience within a fabricated environment.

IT WAS A VERY ANIMAL-FRIENDLY PIECE. A MONGOOSE, POLAR BEAR, OWLS, PIGS, OX, FOX, DONKEY, AND A HAMSTER. QUITE A MOTLEY CREW, DO EACH OF THEM HAVE A SIGNIFICANCE TO YOUR PIECE? WHERE WILL ALL THE ANIMALS GO AFTER THE SHOW?

Only some of the animals have a specific significance to The 10 Penny Hi-Top. The initial intention was to create a diverse cast of characters; whereby the participants and ourselves would take on these new identities. Some of the animals were chosen simply because we have a genuine interest for the animals, while others were picked to make a specific relationship or circumstance occur within the game. For example, we wanted the Pig contestant to be the player of "Cross-cut the Pig's Butt" because we thought it would make a poignant metaphor to have a pig cutting off the butt (or inflicting violence) upon itself or someone of the same species. The animals will most likely appear in future projects or be adopted by anyone wanting to give them a good home.

THE PLAYFULNESS AND ABSURDITY OF TITLES AND PHYSICALITY OF THE GAMES; "WHO'S YOUR DADDY?", "GIVE THAT FOX CHICKEN POX", IMMEDIATELY GETS A BARRAGE OF LAUGHS. DO YOU EXPECT THE AUDIENCE TO RECOGNIZE YOUR PERFORMATIVE PIECE AS ART THAT IS SERIOUS OR ART THAT IS A SPECTACLE?

We would like our audience to recognize the piece as a spectacular, complex endeavor. Spectacle is used in the work as a device to establish a relationship between the host (artist) and the audience based on what roles each may take on. In a time when entertainment has become a primary mode for communication, we feel that adopting similar forms facilitates the way we interface with people. We value the different levels that a project can have; on a certain level the work can be simple, straightforward and humorous, but on a deeper level it comments on social and spatial systems.

AFTER 3 SCHEDULED PERFORMANCES, WOULD YOU CONTINUE TO INCORPORATE AUDIENCE PARTICIPATION WITH YOUR FUTURE ART PROJECTS? IF SO, AT WHAT LEVEL?

The Friendly Falcons and their Friend the Snake have and will continue to invite audience participation in future projects. The core of our practice is rooted in collaboration and collectivity; we approach each project whether it involves participants or not as a synergetic endeavor.



The Friendly Falcons and Their Friend the Snake, 'The 10 penny hi top', installation views (above), performance views and details views (below)





G-77, 'Seeding the Future', multiple installation / details views



G-77

Marguerite Day, Fred Fleisher, Mary Mattingly, David Smith
"Seeding the Future", 2008

Installation of plastic orb, small notepads, and acrylic globe Site specific installation with various dimensions

History is not written in stone, and those who have the power often write history in ways to benefit themselves. This piece seeks to engage a more open and multi-perspective view of history and truth, creating possibilities for empowerment, for new perspectives, and for energy and power to overflow the eroded banks of conventional systems and to be available to everyone. This installation is a time capsule that references human knowledge and indigenous flora on site in 2008.

Viewers can contribute their 21st Century thoughts, recollections, musings, insights, and sketches; in addition to G-77's seeds gathered from Governors Islands to the G-77 / G.I. Seed & Time Capsule. The Capsule will be buried for future generations to unearth in order to learn about this particular moment in time. A virtual version of the capsule will be created on a secure server, potentially becoming an invaluable source for historical data.

WHAT ARE YOUR THOUGHTS ON TIME TRAVEL AND LOOKING OUTWARD TO THE FUTURE?

Some of our members don't believe in time travel in a conventional sense -- however we all acknowledge the quantum possibility at this time. We think of time as cyclical rather than linear. The future is affected by what is happening now. Our project was an effort to have as MANY voices as possible speaking about NOW. In that way the future might have more positive outcomes due to what we are all experiencing and wishing for now. Of course, we are all traveling in time since it never ceases. Remember one of our mottos is "The G-77 is watching your future now . . ."

TIME CAPSULES ARE A FOUNTAIN OF INFORMATION, WHAT WERE SOME OF THE MOST INTERESTING THOUGHTS PARTICIPANTS WROTE ABOUT?

Without commenting on any specific participant thoughts, we acknowledge that many people were attempting to use our time capsule to communicate "into the future" to inform about what is/was happening now -- both personally and communally.

COULD YOU TALK MORE ABOUT THE TIME CAPSULE PROJECT IN THE WESTERN DESERTS OF UNITED STATES? WILL YOU BE SENDING YOUR CAPSULE OVER TO BE PART OF THE LARGER PROJECT?

We will contribute our Seed Bank/Time Capsule to the 10,000 year Library, which is part of the Long Now Foundation. The Library addresses a critical historical information dilemma. The more "high-tech" we get, the shorter the life of our data storage" or so it seems. Thousands of years ago, the Egyptians left us with massive stones that tell their story today. Now people are having a hard time accessing data that was written on Word 3.0!

JASON VAN ANDEN, NAT HAWKS & DAVID LIATTI

"Dirty Dozen", 2008

Interactive software projection and sound

Site specific installation with various dimensions

For thousands of years, the oyster was plentiful in NYC. Governors Island sat in the middle of water teeming with the local bivalves. Humans moved in, polluted New York's water, the oysters became poisoned and eventually all but disappeared. In a way, the apple is to Eden as the oyster is to NYC - innocence lost.

Viewers will hear loud mumbles and noise coming from the room, but then, as they walk in, the oysters abruptly shut. After a moment the oysters will come back to life, at first tentatively. When left alone for a while they will cause quite a commotion.

YOUR PLAYFUL USE OF TWELVE OYSTERS AND THE IMPOSITION OF THEIR 'SILENCING' AS A RESULT OF HUMAN CONTACT IS PARTICULARLY INTERESTING, ESPECIALLY IN THE HISTORICAL CONTEXT OF NEW YORK CITY HARBOR. DO ANY OF YOUR OTHER PROJECTS EXPLORE A SIMILAR SITE-SPECIFIC INTEREST IN ENVIRONMENTAL CONCERNS? Although the environment does concern me, this is the first piece of mine that has addressed it as a cause.

PLEASE ELABORATE ON HOW THE THEME WAS INSPIRED IN RELATION TO GOVERNORS ISLAND AND THE EMERGENCE EXHIBITION?

Governor's Island kind of looks a bit like an oyster shell, don't you think? I have always been fascinated by the history of the oyster in NYC. At one point they were served in bars like peanuts are today. GI was once in the middle of one of the most prolific oyster fields in the US. As civilization emerged, they have been pretty much wiped out! For every action there is an equal and opposite reaction, I suppose.

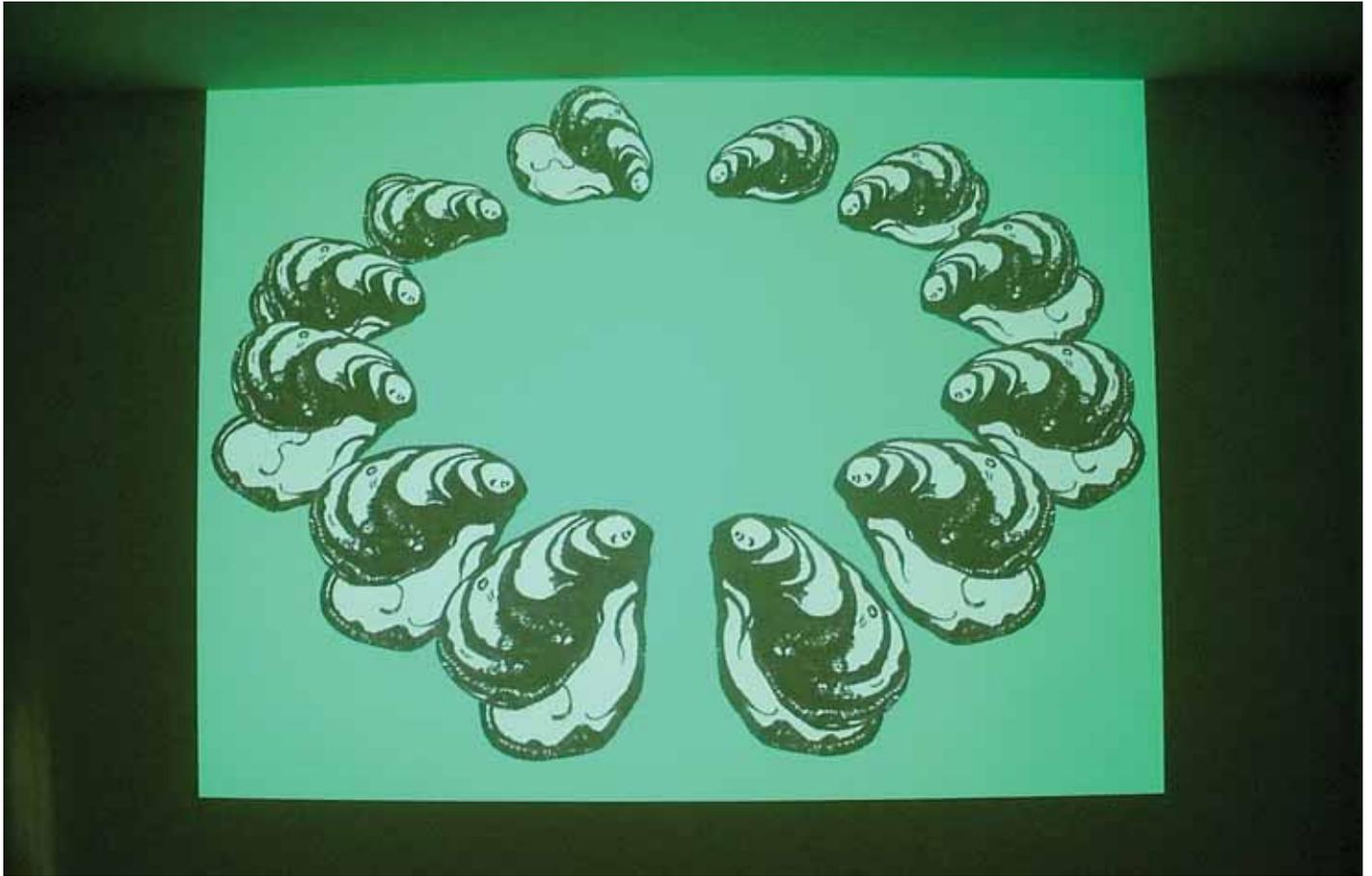
If you are interested in learning more about NYC's relationship with the oyster I highly recommend "The Big Oyster" by Mark Kurlansky.

WORKING IN A INTERACTIVE TECHNOLOGY POSES MANY CHALLENGES AND REQUIRES A FAIR AMOUNT OF TECHNICAL SKILLS THAT HAVE NOT TRADITIONALLY BEEN ASSOCIATED WITH THE FIELD OF THE ARTS. CAN YOU SPEAK TO US ABOUT HOW YOUR GROUP HAVE COLLABORATED TOGETHER TO PRODUCE 'DIRTY DOZEN'?

I have been very fortunate to have met some amazingly talented and generous individuals, without whom my work would not exist. We all are experts in areas that when mixed together bring projects like Dirty Dozen to life. Nat Hawks is an incredible musician and sound engineer who thrives on weird challenges, David Liatti is an industrial engineer who can make anything bend to his will. We have worked together before - and its always incredibly gratifying. My background is in fine arts - it is important to me that what I create does not forget the artist's hand, thus the oysters are drawn in pen and ink.

CAN YOU GIVE US SOME PERSONAL INSIGHT INTO YOUR EXPERIENCE WORKING WITH INTERACTIVE TECHNOLOGY?

If art is about making order from chaos, interactive technology is for control freaks. I suspect I work in this manner as a productive sublimation of a wish to control my environment. Then again, interactive technology offers me a sneaky excuse to play like a child with toys that require hard work to master.



Jason Van Anden / Nat Hawks / David Liatti, 'Dirty Dozen', multiple installation / details views





John Krill, 'the sound machine', detail and installation view

JOHN KRILL

"a sound machine", 2008

Found and bought assembled objects

14" x 5" x 9"

The work plays with the tension / expectation that modern culture expresses toward the machine and the symbolism of the progress of technology. The work also presents the participant with the surprise of fulfilling the self-fulfilling prophecy that 'Something Will Happen'. Man's dependence on technology is comforted by the knowledge that it is encountered in a 'sound and non-confrontational' state. Participants are able to choose to remain in tense anticipation of the piece's activity or flee for more stable surroundings.

THE 'SOUND MACHINE' PLAYS SATIRICALLY WITH THE NOTION THAT TECHNOLOGY WILL EVENTUALLY TURN AGAINST US AND THAT WE ARE IN EXPECTATION OF THIS VERY OUTCOME. CAN YOU ELABORATE WHAT INSPIRED THE IDEA AND HOW IT FUNCTIONS IN THE CONTEXT OF GOVERNORS ISLAND?

I love entertaining the idea that we have designed a technology that we fear and suspect might eventually want to end our era. I find it funny, in the same way that it is funny to call a speaker a sound machine, and then remove the very components that are designed to produce the sound. The redundancy makes it important. I used to watch these horror movies that were set in the future where these general home appliances became crazy machines with a mind of their own.

I like to imagine that Governors Island, this deserted military island in New York harbor, is where the chaos began. Home to a collective of artists who eventually figured out how to breath life into the machine, giving the world what it had only ever dreamed. Acting under the auspices of 'experimental' artists, this group of anarchists was given the complete freedom to create.

IN YOUR PROPOSAL YOU MENTIONED THAT YOUR INTEREST IN PARTICIPATING IN EMERGENCE WAS MOTIVATED BY EXPERIMENTATION TOWARDS RECEPTION OF THE WORK RATHER THAN THAT OF THE PRODUCTION OF AN ARTIST. PLEASE CAN YOU EXPLAIN A LITTLE MORE?

Yes, an experiment and now it is clear that 'a sound machine' needs to be LOUDER, maybe a little more 'frightening' or sporadic. A sensor would be interesting and give it a more interactive quality. Guess it's back to the studio. Hmmm...John Krill is a collective effort in that it is non-specific, a means to produce without the baggage of history or expectations of production.

ARE THERE ANY OTHER EXPERIMENTAL PARTICIPATORY PROJECTS THAT YOU'RE CURRENTLY DEVELOPING?

Living...

JOHN WALTER

"True Mirror - the Future of Self Awareness", 2008

Mirror, plastic, wood and light

24" x 60" x 8"

The True Mirror is an amazing new look at yourself through a most familiar medium – the mirror. However, unlike traditional mirrors, the True Mirror reflects without reversal, so for the first time what you see what everyone else sees. The differences are not just physical, as what you say with your face is right and left sided, so your expressions and underlying personality change when they get reversed. It's the real "you" looking back!

As you walk past the row of True Mirrors, notice some funny physics - you are always in the center of each True Mirror! Hold some writing up - can you read it? Now look into your eyes - who is that looking back? Try a smile - can it be real for once? Do you feel crooked (don't worry, it's an exaggeration). Compare to the side panel - notice how it's familiar, but flat and uninspiring. Think of how mirrors have been doing this your whole life!

YOUR FIRST ENCOUNTER WITH A TRUE MIRROR WAS ACCIDENTAL BUT REVELATORY. WHAT HAPPENED TO YOU IN THAT MOMENT?

My first encounter with a True Mirror was in a bathroom, where there was a medicine cabinet mirror at right angles to the regular mirror in front of me. What struck me immediately was that I "recognized" myself in the single true image reflection created by the two mirrors. There was something qualitatively different about the light in my eyes (I had been laughing and smiling when I first went into the bathroom). When I see myself smiling in a backwards mirror, the light in my eyes almost always looks more manic than happy, and my smile always looks fake. Usually the first response I have is that there must be something wrong and I stop smiling almost immediately and begin criticizing myself in any number of ways.

But for the first time, when I saw my true image reflection, the light in my eyes actually registered something clearly - it showed my emotion of happiness - and I recognized it as exactly the way I had been feeling. My smile, which had faded rapidly in the backwards mirror, suddenly sprang back to life, and an overwhelming feeling of amazement and discovery came over me. "There you are!" I said to myself. And the beauty was that I didn't disappear even after 5 minutes of being amazed - my reflection continued to be a clear reflection of all that I was thinking and feeling, including, "OOPS, I better give up the bathroom!" when the pounding on the door started!

THE MIRROR HAS BEEN ALWAYS BEEN A SYMBOL AND A TOOL FOR CONSCIOUSNESS AND SELF-DISCOVERY. WHAT CAN A TRUE MIRROR DO FOR US THAT A REGULAR MIRROR CAN'T?

The mirror itself has always been assumed to be a view of ourselves - in fact, very few species of animals actually recognize themselves in a mirror, and those that do, don't really use it for self discovery - this appears to be a uniquely human trait, and it may have helped us evolutionarily since the first cave person looked into a swimming pool and recognized themselves.

However, in the entire history of mirrors, they have always been backwards - reflecting not our true selves, but some odd distortion that is made even worse because no one tells us it is distorted. The problem arises because we are not symmetric - our faces carry information that is sided, based on left brain/right brain differences. In order to properly convey an expression, the sides need to be correctly placed, otherwise the expression and communication is altered. Because its in real-time, with a dynamic feedback loop, and it has gone on our entire lives, this odd distortion of communication has given us all faulty self-images - we really do not know ourselves properly.

Correcting this life long deception with a True Mirror offers the promise of clearing long term, fundamental flaws in how we think we are perceived by others. Often the inner self is very critical compared to what others see in us, mainly because we don't see ourselves in action. It is similar to a camera, where even though it is a true image, a photo is static. Instead, how we are is a flow, how people see us is a combination of a myriad of visual cues over the course of a conversation. What the True Mirror promises to do is show us how we flow, how the genuine expressions we have convey the essence of who we are. This new information, over time, can heal destructive self-image problems - one of which is simply that we believe we are not "normal" - that there is something wrong with us because our face in the backwards mirror tells us so.



John Walter, 'True Mirror - the Future of Self Awareness', installation views and artist talk by John Walter (below right)

image © wretched rhapsody





Michael Alan, 'Porthole to Draw-a-thon', multiple installation views, 'the man of 9 arms' performer (above right) and performance views in Trinity church (below right)



MICHAEL ALAN

"Porthole to Draw-a-thon", 2008

Drawing photocopies, sculptures, video feed and decoupage furniture

Various dimensions with performance in Trinity church (next to Building 14)

Existing drawings envelop the space and encourage the creation of new drawings. The installation is a mental link to a playful yet dark world of childhood curiosity and interpretation. The overall piece taps into the energy of a children's room, where you are free to draw whatever you understand and don't understand.

Experience the Draw-a-thon on Governors Island in a concentrated participatory setting. Nick Greenwald and Matthew Brennan from Draw-a-thon Theatre have put pieces in from our collective. A costumed performance of the 'Draw-a-thon' theatre took place on Sunday, June 29th at 4:00 PM.

THE 'DRAW-A-THON' THEATRE EVENT AT EMERGENCE ENDED UP TAKING PLACE IN THE TRINITY CHURCH NEXT TO BUILDING 14 BECAUSE OF THE RAINY WEATHER, HOW DO YOU FEEL THIS SOMEWHAT CONTROVERSIAL CONTEXT INFLUENCED THE PERFORMANCE?

We adapt to any situation; we are primarily a improv group and thrive on this. We planed on having a outdoor preformance called Con-munication, the true story of average joe and his reawaking through draw-a-thon. Instead, we anointed him in the church in paint and whipped cream. It was dark, as was the lightning and overcast sky and so my team wolf 5000, auntie transformer, dave the object, the man of 9 arms and gregasourous put a spell back into this creepafied monumentt.

THE 'DRAW-A-THON' THEATRE IS REALLY DYNAMIC AND SOMEWHAT EVOLVING PROJECT, LATELY YOU HAVE TAKEN THE THEATRE PERFORMERS TO THE STREETS AND ON THE SUBWAY SYSTEM. WHERE DO YOU ENVISION YOUR PROJECT WILL GO NEXT?

We just did a illegal performance in the Whitney Biennial. The whole staff thought we were scheduled, 20 security guards hovered, and a crowd of anxious tourists surrounded our scandalous performance. It lasted an hour and it got printed in the NY Press. Draw-a-thon theatre will happen everywhere - we did a performance in August at Jack the Pelican Presents gallery (a legal version), and we have performed outside The American Museum of Natural History...we're a band, we just show up invited or not. It's DIY.

THE 'DRAW-A-THON' IS AN INTERACTIVE PERFORMANCE THAT REQUIRES THE COLLABORATION OF YOUR PERFORMERS AND THAT OF THE ARTISTS THAT ATTEND OR RESPOND TO THE WORK, HOW HAS THIS THIS LARGER PROJECT AFFECTED YOUR PERSONAL PRODUCTION AS AN INDIVIDUAL ARTIST?

In short, it has helped me become a good person, a people person, there are a lot of little pieces and needs that go into the theatre piece and I must cater to others before myself, and thats helps balance out my relentless self-indulged creative time.

MONICA MULLER

"Creatures Who Live in Our Plants", 2008

5 Lightboxes, several potted plants and found objects

Various Dimensions

Governors Island is a whimsical place. These pieces place little creatures from cereal boxes, chocolate eggs, and 50 cent vending machines into a new habitat. They have found a new home in plants inside Building 14. The photographs capture and document them, bringing them to life.

Viewers are welcome to take a creature and give him/her a new home. If so inclined, they can give something back in exchange, perhaps welcome a new creature to the habitat.

YOUR PROJECT IS VERY PLAYFUL AND RELIES ON THE AUDIENCE BRINGING NEW CREATURES TO YOUR INSTALLATION. HOW MANY NEW CHARACTERS HAVE YOU FOUND AND WHAT ARE YOUR FUTURE PLANS FOR THESE LITTLE GUYS?

I probably didn't communicate enough that people were supposed to bring little creatures, and who walks around with random creatures in their pockets? So, not too many were brought, but some people took the time to make creatures out of paper, foil, and other materials, to add to the plants, which I think was very personal! And by the time we took the show down only one funny little drawing was left in one of the plants, that means every one else must have found a new home! Future plans are taking my favorite creatures on a stroll around the city and taking the typical tourist photos of them...

GOVERNORS ISLAND IS AN UNUSUAL VENUE THAT IS PERFECT FOR EXPERIMENTAL ART PROJECTS. HOW DID YOU FIND THE EXPERIENCE OF PRESENTING WORK IN SUCH A UNIQUE CONTEXT?

I am very happy that I was able to be part of this whole experience. Very proud that I was invited to help bring life to one of the deserted ghost houses on the island.

HOW DO YOU FORESEE YOUR WORK DEVELOPING WITH REGARDS TO YOUR EXPERIENCE IN A PARTICIPATORY FIELD?

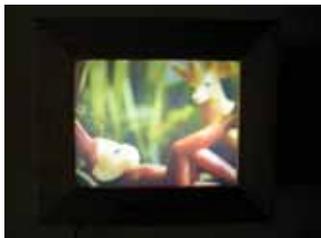
I love participatory art, since I was a kid I've always been drawn to pieces I can touch, play with, or alter. Photography isn't a very obvious choice for this kind of art form, so I look at it as a challenge to come up with ideas that make this work.

CAN YOU TELL US A LITTLE ABOUT ANY NEW PROJECTS THAT YOU ARE CURRENTLY WORKING ON?

I am currently working on a series of images looking up at things. In German there is the expression "frog's perspective" .. seeing the world from a very low angle. I am exploring how things change their look completely depending on the angle you look at from, and how for example a building can turn into abstract shapes, a wall can turn into a landscape, a three dimensional object can turn into something completely flat looking.



Monica Muller, 'Creatures Who Live in Our Plants', installation and detail views with new creatures (below right)





Peripheral Media Projects, 'The Hive', multiple installation views and detail views over the 9 week period



PERIPHERAL MEDIA PROJECTS

Garrison Buxton & Ray Cross

"The Hive", 2008

Vinyl and paper silkscreened pieces and pushpins

This piece is a giant geometric puzzle that is an open playing field where the viewers can exercise their vision and play a part in creating a large-scale installation. It is a collaborative art piece that grows, evolves, and takes on new meaning with each additional input and feeling. It grows like a bee hive as new combs are added, symbolizing the creative and constructive potential all of us possess.

The installation has several existing pieces that are already in place. Viewers can place hexagonally-shaped pieces, roughly 12 inches in diameter, with varying arrangements directly on the wall with pushpins. From that point forward, the people that venture to the piece will be able to activate it in their own way.

IT IS INTERESTING THAT A HIVE IS GENERALLY BUILT BY A COLONY OF BEES AND THAT GOVERNORS ISLAND WAS ONCE A COLONY OF MILITARY PERSONAL. WHERE DID THE IDEA FOR THE HIVE COME FROM? AND HOW DOES IT RELATE TO THE CONTEXT?

We were interested in complex shapes that could be stacked to fill a surface. We have also been working with flat layers of pattern and graphics and dimensional shapes, like cubes. A hexagon, as in a bee hive, can be transformed into a cube easily by adding three diamond shapes of different values. It is a nice shape. We have also worked with the idea of hives and images of bees before. Our organization, Peripheral Media Projects, is a collective of flexible size, depending on the scale of the project. We like to think that people can come and plug in on a simple task and the decisions they make add to the richness of art that has a basic structure or guiding framework. Many people worked on the creation of the imagery on the panels, with stencils, silkscreens, freehand painting and drawing, and collage. The material the hexagons were made of was recycled sticky automotive vinyl, for wrapping trucks with advertising, so there was some content to work against already on the material. The tiles were then cut out by a team and the viewers could place them into a grid that was sketched in on the background imagery, which was a piece we had made about the human RFID chip. We were thinking more about interactive structure but it does fit the military locale, as well.

YOUR WORK HAS PRODUCED THESE LARGE AND REALLY BEAUTIFUL PANELS, WHAT ARE YOU GOING TO DO WITH THESE PANELS?

We are hoping to use the panels as street art, as well as the remaining unstuck tiles. We will probably use a portion of the panels as complex backgrounds in our studio art, working back over it with other images. We have been giving some to people who helped on the project as decorative stickers.

WE HEAR THAT YOUR GROUP IS EMBARKING ON SOME TRAVELS AND EXHIBITIONS ABROAD. CAN YOU GIVES US SOME MORE DETAILS AND LET US KNOW IF YOU WILL BE INCLUDING ANY PARTICIPATORY COMPONENTS IN THESE SHOWINGS?

We are headed to the Burning Man Art Festival in Nevada where we do live silkscreen printing with thematic images on clothing and other materials provided by the participants. It is fun as we work with a few other silkscreen printers who bring their own screens and images. There are many surprising collages that result from the overlapping is images from different printer's designs. Many of these people we only see once a year... it is funny how similar some of our designs are when we get together.

We are also going to Europe to tour and create art and are having a gallery show which opens October 3, 2008 at Pure Evil Gallery in London. The gallery show will be fun and we are really looking forward to traveling, visiting friends, and putting up new work. We think that some of the hexagons form Governors Island will definitely make an appearance on our trip. We always tend to work with locals and make some collaborations as we go, that is the nature of making art in public space.

PORNJ DIAMOND CELL

"Pornj Diamond Cloud", 2008

Cardboard, string, sharpies and blacklight

Various

Pornj Diamond Cloud is an on-going project made of an evolving set of fluorescent tiles (Diamonds) assembled in different configurations to create a variety of mobile sculptures. The original setting for the installation is hung from the ceiling of a dark room lit only with black lights.

The installation is an invitation to the audience to personalize each Diamond by writing and/or drawing on them. A pen will be the last element hanging at the bottom of each string of Diamonds.

YOUR PORNJ DIAMOND CLOUD IS AN ON-GOING SCULPTURAL PROJECT. WHAT HAPPENS TO THE DIAMONDS AFTER THE SHOW? After the installation was taken down from Building 14, one third of Pornj Diamond Cloud was shipped to Disorient camp at Burning Man. At the end of the event, this portion of the Cloud was taken to Los Angeles as seed for a new--West Coast-instance of PDC. More Diamonds will be made in Los Angeles and added to this subset of the original installation so it grows into its own Cloud, much like a cell if you will. This new instance of PDC will be presented as part of the Disorient presence at the LA Decom event in October. The rest of the Cloud presented at Emergence will stay in New York for now and keep growing until its next presentation.

A LOT OF YOUR WORK HAS THE DANCE FLOOR IN MIND (YOU ACTUALLY TEMPORARILY MOVED THE CLOUD TO A PARTY IN THE MIDDLE OF THE EXHIBITION PERIOD). FOR EMERGENCE YOU PULLED YOUR PIECE AWAY FROM THE BEATS INTO A QUIET HOUSE ON GOVERNORS ISLAND. WHAT EFFECT DO YOU THINK IT HAS ON PEOPLE TO HAVE THEIR HEADS IN A QUIET, BLACK-LIT FLUORESCENT NEON CLOUD?

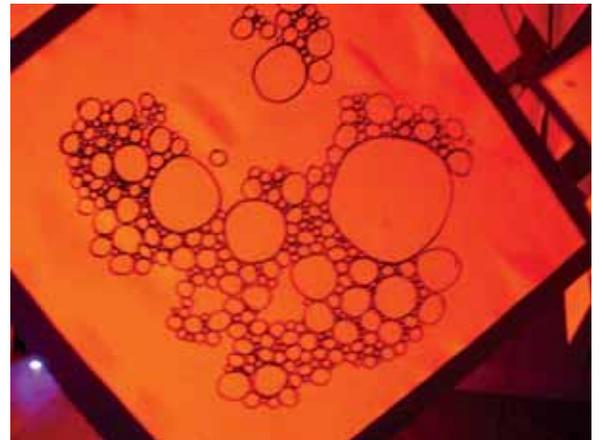
A quiet environment allowed us (Pornj Diamond Cell) to display the Cloud so the audience could write and draw on each Diamond. We call this way of presenting the Cloud the Ambient mode, as opposed to the Dancefloor mode. The main difference between Ambient and Dancefloor modes is the height at which the Cloud is presented. The first one is low and provides a sense of immersion as the participants walking through the installation find themselves with their heads in the Cloud, the latter is above head, inspiring the dancers by emanating energy towards the dancefloor. One of the effects of the participants' contribution in Ambient mode is to reverberate the presence of all previous participants and to enrich the experience that the Cloud provides in Dancefloor mode. One could think of the Ambient mode as the harvesting mode and the Dancefloor mode as the distribution mode. The two different modes create a rhythm which helps connect all the participants and sequence the overall life of the installation.

WHAT WERE SOME OF YOUR FAVORITE INSCRIPTIONS?

Contributions that add to other contributions fascinate me. I like how they challenge the sense of property of Diamond real-estate that one might feel entitled to after drawing or writing on a Diamond. It is interesting to see how participants engaged in this challenge formulate their entry--from irreverently writing over someone else's inscription, to filling-in the negative space left by previous contributors, to starting a written dialog that is sometimes picked-up by another contributor and becomes a conversation that involves more than two participants in the manner of an exquisite corpse. I also like large, high-contrast drawings as they become punctuation marks in the Cloud when displayed in Dancefloor mode.

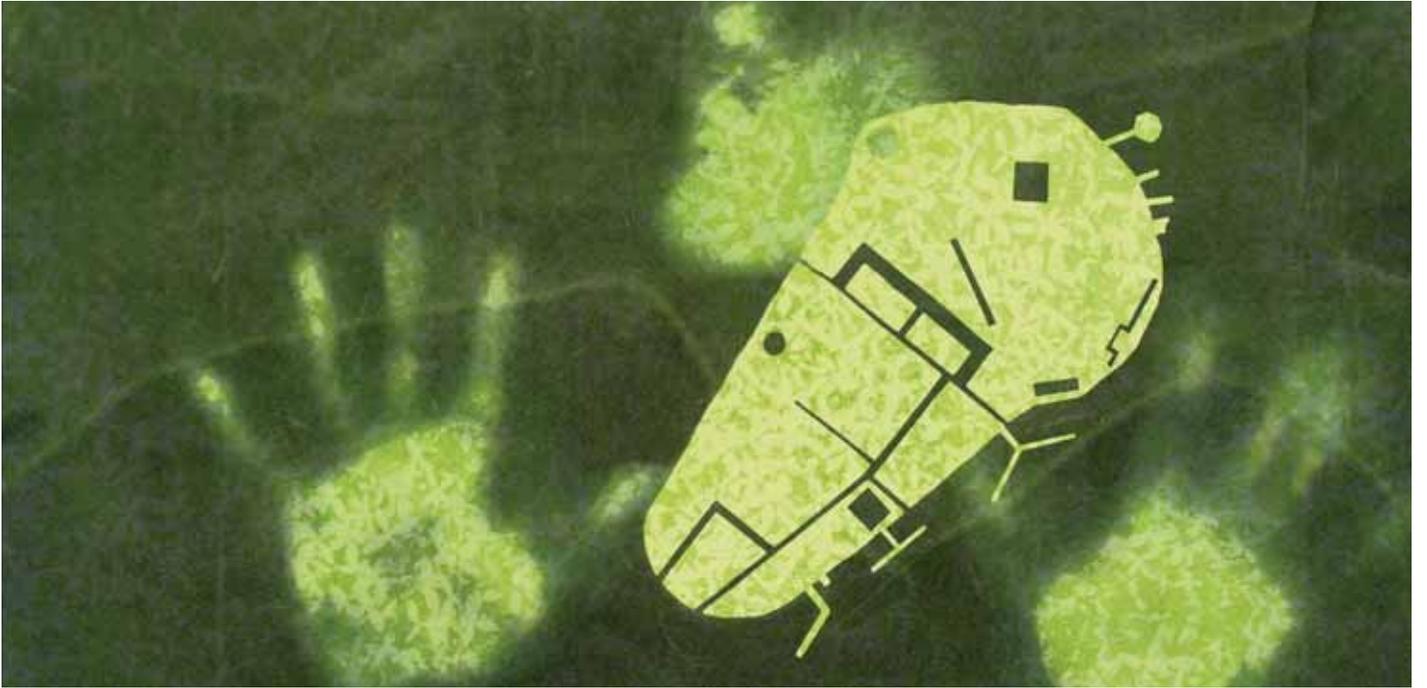


Pornj Diamond Cell, 'Pornj Diamond Cloud', multiple installation and detail views





Sarah Nicole Phillips, '98', detail views with interaction effect (below)



SARAH NICOLE PHILLIPS

"98°", 2008

Temperature sensitive screenprint

14" x 22"

"98°" serves as a metaphor for the effect that visitors will have on Governors Island. Over time, the island's function and landscape will be determined by the people, changing inevitably as it has so often in the past. The title 98° refers to the approximate body temperature of humans on the Fahrenheit scale as well as a cartographer's unit of measurement.

The image of Governors Island is printed with regular green ink and the surrounding waterway is printed with thermochromic (heat-sensitive) dark blue ink that disappears at a set temperature. Participants may touch the image with a warm body part. The blue ink on this print disappears when it reaches human body temperature. As the ink heats up, it will disappear. For optimal results, be patient and touch the map for longer periods of time.

AS A PRINT ARTIST, DID YOU FIND IT A CHALLENGE TO PRODUCE A WORK THAT IS TWO DIMENSIONAL AND PARTICIPATORY?

For me, the challenge was to create a piece that is not changed permanently by the interaction of each viewer. 98° restores to its original form after every encounter with a participant. The first person to interact with the piece sees the same image that the 47th person does. I wanted to offer every viewer the experience of touching and mark-making on a fresh surface.

WHAT WOULD YOU ADVISE OTHER ARTISTS THAT WOULD LIKE TO MAKE A TWO DIMENSIONAL WORK THAT IS PARTICIPATORY IN NATURE?

I would advise the artist to think about what kind of experience they'd like the viewer to have then move forward with image-creation from that point. When making participatory art it's important to be able to relinquish control because you have no idea what people are going to do with your work once it's out in the world. One advantage to this is that a certain burden is lifted off the artist's shoulders, knowing that completing the piece is no longer his or her responsibility.

AFTER EXHIBITING YOUR PIECE IN EMERGENCE, WHAT ASPECTS OF GOVERNORS ISLAND DOES THE IMAGE ON YOUR HEAT SENSITIVE PRINT REPRESENT? IS THERE A DIFFERENCE BETWEEN WHAT IT MEANT TO YOU BEFORE IT WAS INTERACTED WITH AND WHAT IT MEANS AFTER?

The fixed image on the print is an aerial view of the island, adapted from Google Earth. The crisp edges of the image contrast with the messy reality of sweaty, sticky fingers that have pressed into the paper over the summer. Despite knowing that the piece has been touched by hundreds of people, I can't know what those interactions looked like because the piece restores itself to its original state after every interaction. As a result, the meaning to me is unchanged.

SAVIOUR SCRAPS

"Porch Songs: Into the Shade" & "Untitled Closet Piece", 2008

Rope, yarn, clothing and textiles

Site specific installation (front porch and 2nd floor)

Donated, used, and recycled fabric is woven into the installation that creates a fantastical environment. Textiles can reference powerful, personal and collective memories, where they serve as a medium to explore the cycle of creation and exchange.

Viewers are invited to bring pieces of fabric (this could be in the form of old clothing, curtains, etc), cut them into strips and add them to the off-loom weaving. Fabric is also supplied on the porch for weaving. Weaving is simple and intuitive (over one rope, under the next, and so on). They are encouraged to pay attention to color blocks, shaping and shading.

THE 'PORCH SONGS' WORK HAS FUNCTIONED IN A SENSE AS A GAUGE FOR THE EMERGENT NATURE OF THE SHOW IN GENERAL. WITH EVERY WEEK AS THE PORCH SHIFTED AND TRANSFORMED, IT HAS SHAPED THE WAY RETURN VISITORS HAVE VIEWED THEIR EXPERIENCE OF THE SHOW. WHAT ARE YOUR FEELING OF HOW THE PIECE EVOLVED?

Scappy 1: I was so pleased to see how the piece transformed and took over the negative space of the porch. I wasn't really expecting a web-like structure to form from the original structure and fill so much of the space. It was so exciting to see people participate and be able to dialog with them about their interaction. Most visitors responded well to the tactile element of the structure and many people had the initial reaction to touch the piece. That is usually our intention in the work and it really worked with this piece.

ARE THERE ANY SURPRISES THAT YOU HAVE EXPERIENCED THROUGH THIS PROCESS?

Scappy 2: I think that it's sometimes hard for people to see themselves as creative individuals, or as artists. One thing that this project seemed to provide was an informal space and few rules within which to participate, making it easier for people to contribute. I was also surprised by people's inventiveness; some ways in which people wove, or added to the weaving, were things we haven't thought of or tried before.

Scappy 1: I agree - it was fascinating to see how other people responded to the materials and used them in ways we had never tried before.

WHERE IS YOUR COLLECTIVE TAKING THE PROJECT FROM HERE?

Scappy 2: We've always be interested in interactive art, believing that through viewer participation, art can be closer to the heart. There were many successes in this project, and this will inform and inspire future projects.

Scappy 1: I don't think we ever really have clear cut plans for the future - which like to take on opportunities as the come along and adapt to new situations and environments.

IT IS INTERESTING THAT EACH OF YOUR WORKS AS INDIVIDUAL ARTISTS IS VERY DIFFERENT FROM THAT OF THE WORK PRODUCED BY THE COLLECTIVE. HOW DID YOU COME TOGETHER? AND WHAT HAS SHAPED THE WORK THAT YOUR GROUP CURRENTLY PRODUCES?

Scappy 2: As individual artists, the collective gives each of us the opportunity to experiment with ideas or interests we have, but would probably never pursue or even be able to realize on our own. Our work is also shaped by each of our distinctly different relationships with craft, our common experience of living in a metropolis outside of nature, and our similar aesthetic interests.

Scappy 1: For me, this collaboration allows me to create on a scale and time-line which would be impossible for one person to accomplish on their own. I love working with textiles but find that committing to one medium often causes frustration and stagnant periods in my work.



Saviour Scraps, 'Porch Songs: Into the Shade' and 'Untitled Closet Piece' (Below top right), multiple installation and detail views views taken over the 9 week period





Tara Parsons, 'Fork it Over', multiple installation and detail views taken over the 9 week period



TARA PARSONS

"Fork it Over", 2008

Paper and scissors

Site specific installation with various dimensions

Fork It Over is about the cost of the current war in Iraq and Afghanistan. It deals with the literal sense of the price of the war (the most recent numbers indicate \$822 billion, with expectations of it surpassing \$1 trillion), but also with the cost on the lives, livelihoods, and quality of life of all of us. Military families mainly carry this burden.

This war is quickly becoming one of the most expensive wars the US has ever fought, with the inflation-adjusted rate of WWII being the only larger amount. We are each personally getting "poked," and asked to shell out for a war that could be seen as unconstitutional. Is it possible to fill the room with 822 billion of these paper forks? Or even 1/1000 of this figure? (Each fork representing a \$1000 note.) 822,000,000 is a number that is impossible to imagine as a number that could actually be represented-- and that is part of the point of this installation, it is impossible to create this amount of a simple handmade object.

Having the content of this installation be about the Iraq war is important because it is situated on a former military base. Site specificity is a central aspect of my work, therefore the fact that the space that I am using is a kitchen space, and the fact that it is on a military base are both drawn out in the piece.

Visitors are encouraged to add to the installation by using the provided scissors to make more of the fork cutouts. The forks can be placed anywhere in the room. Viewer participation is important because we all, in some way, are bearing the cost of this war.

WORKING IN A PARTICIPATORY NATURE OFTEN BRINGS TO LIGHT IDEAS AND RESPONSES THAT ARTISTS MIGHT NOT HAVE PREVIOUSLY CONSIDERED. HAVE YOU FOUND OR STUMBLED UPON ANY NEW IDEAS AS A RESULT OF AUDIENCE RESPONSES? IF SO, CAN YOU ELABORATE ON AN EXAMPLE?

My work, even before I went "participatory," was often labor intensive and required a lot of handiwork. I discovered that participatory art helps with labor resources! On a more serious note though, my work, although often fun and amusing, deals with serious issues. Getting people involved with the project on a physical level will often lead participants into becoming involved on a mental level as well. This engagement is what artists are always looking for, so this has been a real breakthrough.

I am also interested in the different aesthetic choices that people make. I tend towards order in my work, but when you open up your artwork for interaction, you as the artist cannot control the visual decisions that the participants make. I loved the chaos that ensued.

I AM CURIOUS, WHAT DO YOU ESTIMATE IS YOUR FINAL COUNT ON FORKS PRODUCED?

I brought about 5,000 forks to begin with, and then left a couple of reams of paper with fork templates drawn on them. There were 10 to 12 forks per page... so the final number is over 10,000 forks. 14,000 is my estimate. If each fork represented a one thousand dollar note, then the amount of forks in the room symbolized 14 million dollars! This is a lot of money, but still not close to the cost of the current war.

DO YOU HAVE ANY PLANS FOR ANY MORE PARTICIPATORY BASED PROJECTS IN THE NEAR FUTURE?

I am currently working on a participatory art piece called "Not Without A Trace" for the DUMBO Art's Center 'Art Under the Bridge' Festival. This piece deals with threatened and endangered birds of the New York Metropolitan Area, and involves participants creating a street mural of flocks of birds with templates of their silhouettes that I have prepared.

TIM & MARTIN DOCKERY

"Long Distance", 2008

Sound and speakers

25 minute loop

While there can be more than one view on any event, this piece is more interested on the many takes of one view, and the resulting meaninglessness. This work examines the digression of information as it travels from mouth-to-ear and ear-to-mouth back to mouth-to-ear and so on and on and on. Each narration of a single message is altered by the nature, prejudices and limitations of the narrator.

Like a game of telephone, each speaker is playing a recording of a person listening to and trying their best to exactly repeat what the previous recording/speaker is saying. With each successive speaker, the information degenerates. Because all the speakers are playing at once, the room becomes a cacophony of voices, the meaninglessness amplified by the stilted cadence of each person trying to keep up with what they're listening to. Standing next to one speaker gives the participant one take on a certain view. Staying close to another speaker gives the participant another take on that same view. Remaining between them all exposes the participant to all the takes of the same view at once and the babel of information that that is. The participants are encouraged to contribute to the retelling of the same view.

"LONG DISTANCE" IS A PIECE ABOUT THE DEGENERATION OF ONE AND THE SAME MESSAGE AS IT TRAVELS FROM MOUTHS TO EARS. IN THE CONTEXT OF THE MESSENGER MAKING THE MESSAGE, WHAT KIND OF INFORMATION DO YOU TRUST?

It's tempting to say trust information that's relayed to you with less messengers; take the primary source over the secondary or tertiary. But, I think the answer really depends on who the messenger is.

WHAT DETERMINED THE SELECTION OF THE SOUNDBITES?

A large part of it was variety to get a cross-section of what's out there on the airwaves including news, comedy, sports, financial updates and infotainment.

But in doing this, it became aparent just how banal most of the content being broadcast is. So, we were also looking to find things that when stripped of their context and relayed in a different style would make the listener question what we spend so much of our time consuming.

WHAT PROMPTED THE IDEA OF THIS PROJECT?

Radios, showering and telephones.

My clock radio is set to the fm NPR station, and the radio in the bathroom was set to the am NPR station. In the mornings, the am and FM stations both broadcasted the BBC World Service, but there was a delay of a few seconds between the two. If I left them both on at stood between them the information overload was unbearable even though it was the same message just slightly staggered.

While listening to the BBC World Service in the shower, I often tried to follow along out loud what they were saying on the broadcast. It's a really hard and frustrating exercise, and I was quite curious as to how much I actually got right. I figured that I could find out if I recorded myself.

Once the idea of recording this exercise came, I figured why stop there. Make it like the childhood game of Telephone where a sentence gets whispered down a human line and eventually is distorted. If I could try to replicate the BBC World Service, why not distort it another generation by having someone else try to replicate my replication?



Tim & Martin Dockery, 'Long Distance', multiple installation and detail views



The Triangle Project & The Finishing School, 'Red's Pyramid' (above left) and 'Pass / Detect' (above right), multiple installation views taken over the 9 week period

TRIANGLE PROJECT & THE FINISHING SCHOOL

1. *"Red's Pyramid"*, 2008 - GRID-System squares, various dimensions
2. *"Pass / Detect"*, 2008 - Wood and electronics, 100" x 32" x 20"

1. Artists from Copenhagen, Denmark and Istanbul, Turkey, hand carried these white cubes from Copenhagen to New York City. The purpose of this act is to challenge airport security's intelligence and common sense. With the cubes securely in the hands of these artists, they will build a structure that stands for power and enlightenment. They will arrange the squares to form the base of the pyramid, and continue to build it together to achieve the same goal. Participants will be given squares to help complete the pyramid with the artist collective. The exchange of ideas and stories while building this structure will stimulate the energy that is theoretically emanated from the pyramid. Upon completion of the apex, participants are free to deconstruct and reconstruct the edifice, with the help of other viewers.

2. *Pass / Detect* (2006) is a publicly placed and unmonitored object that safely employs classified technology and criteria to detect specific targets. The work musters both unresolved concern and curiosity via sounding an alarm. Viewers react differently to various means of security measures, as do participants who reinforce safeguards, surveillance and defense. Participants are welcome to walk through the wooden frame. *Pass / Detect* alarm is controlled by secret technology embedded in the structure. If detected, an alarm will sound.

Triangle Project - WITH 30 CUBES THAT WERE "CARRIED ON" THE AIRPLANE JOURNEY FROM COPENHAGEN TO JFK AIRPORT AND THE BATTERY MARITIME FERRY, CAN YOU "COLLECTIVELY" DESCRIBE WHAT IT FELT LIKE TRANSPORTING THESE OBJECTS?

Essentially the group effort of bringing Danish empty space to America withing the over sized cubes was an interactive performance in itself. With one person going ahead of the rest of the group, scouting and planning the best way of getting past all the various security guards and check points along with the carefully planned set of instructions, it became similar to the preparation of dry-run for something much more sinister. The feeling of fear and stress is all really a large part of entering an American airport post 9/11. By bringing these cubes, it gave the experience a new dimension. Explaining the idea of building a pyramid on Governors Island with the three awkward cubes in your hands to a TSA Homeland Security Guard at an airport, is just out of the question.

THE SYMBOL OF PYRAMIDS REPRESENT OMNIPOTENCE, STRENGTH AND IDEALS. WHAT ASPECTS OF CONTEMPORARY CULTURE ARE YOU REPRESENTING?

In our project, collectively building the shape of the pyramid was the shared goal of the group. The combination with the timing of Midsummer Solstice, where the sun stands at its highest point of the year and people for thousands of years have gathered to worship the Sun God, along with the importance of the pyramid in these cultures, are crucial. With a new spiritual search in much of our contemporary culture, using symbols that are logged into our collective consciousness is a natural choice to communicate in pure form and shape.

And in the same way the boy in Paulo Coelho's book "The Alchemist" dreamed of the Egyptian Pyramids to be the ultimate goal to reach in his life, the vision of building a pyramid on Governors Island was also the collective goal of the group. However, in the same way as in the book, it is not the actual reaching (or in our case building)the Pyramid that is thegoal, but what one learns and the process during the journey there.

Finishing School - GOVERNORS ISLAND WAS USED AS A MILITARY BASE IN THE PAST. HOW DID THIS INFLUENCE THE REALIZATION OF YOUR PIECE?

Because Governors Island was at one time a military base, it enriches the context in which the public can use as a starting point in understanding the work. Since 9/11 it is difficult for any public work to exist outside the military context. The history of Governors Island brought into the forefront some of the issues we are interested in, i.e. the militarization of public space in the new post 9/11 world.

FROM AN ANTHROPOLOGICAL STANDPOINT, DO YOU FEEL THAT THE CURRENT POLITICAL STRUCTURE OF THE UNITED STATES IS MOVING FASTER OR SLOWER THAN THE PEOPLE IT GOVERNS? HOW DOES THIS AFFECT YOUR PRELIMINARY THOUGHTS IN CURRENT AND FUTURE PROJECTS?

To answer your first question, there are definitely times when both cases present themselves. Finishing School tries to pay close attention to the various political structures, processes, and outcomes. The question for us is not if something is moving too fast or too slow. Rather we try to observe the successes and failures of these systems. We then use those observations in many forms within our work.

URBAN HOMESTEADING PROJECT

Francisca Caporali, Laura Grace Chipley, Pilar Ortiz

"Summer Homestead", 2008 Performance

Wooden frame of plants in recycled plastic bottles

Over nine weeks, the structure will be gradually insulated with salvaged plastic bottles, re-purposed as receptacles for organic life. Within each bottle, living plants are cultivated in either soil or water. The dialogue and interaction initiated through the construction of the homestead in tandem with planting, cultivating, and harvesting is integral to sustainability. The collaboration between artists and audience patterns a simple model of a community.

Viewers are invited to donate plastic bottles and participate in the planting process. At the end of the summer, the wood skeleton will be recycled and the plants will be given away; transplanted to a new place in which to grow roots and emerge.

PLANTS, PLANTS AND MORE PLANTS! YOU MENTIONED HOW MANY NEW YORKERS ARE DIVORCED FROM NATURE. WHAT TYPES OF IDEALS ARE YOU ENCOURAGING LOCALS TO ASPIRE TO?

In a place like New York City, where natural areas are few and garbage is plenty, we wanted to show how using available resources to build a relationship with nature could promote a sense of awareness and self-sufficiency.

The plants raised in the Summer Homestead addressed two basic needs: food and shelter. In inviting the public to take part in the cultivation process, we hoped to foster confidence in the individual's ability to sustain life, even in an urban environment.

YOUR RECENT EXECUTED WORKS INCLUDE A STRONG SENSE OF EXCHANGING AND SHARING PHYSICAL OBJECTS AND SPACE. HOW DOES THAT AFFECT THE AUTHORSHIP OF YOUR WORK IN TERMS OF PARTICIPATORY ART?

Sharing a space allows us to reach out to a community, and therefore every experience is the immediate reflection of a particular place and a group of people. Every intervention is unrepeatable and defined by chance, impossible to plan ahead, and vulnerable to the reactions of others and weather conditions. By inviting the audience to contribute with a donation, their work, or just their leisure time with us, they become an inseparable component of the artwork. At the end of every project all objects collected along the process are given away or left behind for the taking. These social objects then become part of somebody's home, continuing the project's life in a different context. Today, the plants that gave shape to the Summer Homestead are distributed in different people's windows and backyards. The structure will be reassembled on the rooftop of some friends, adapting to their own needs and imagination.

IN TERMS OF AMERICAN CULTURE, WHAT SOCIO-ECONOMIC PATTERNS IMPACT YOU TO UTILIZE YOUR PIECE AS A VEHICLE FOR COMMUNICATING THESE ISSUES?

The project reflected the complementary relationship between the singular and the plural in considering the issues of sustainability and waste management. The participation of each individual is one building block in the creation of a larger reality. Summer Homestead is not necessarily intended as a literal solution for survival amidst environmental degradation, but rather as part of the larger dialogue of how we can re-imagine the structure of our world.

YOUR COLLECTIVE URBAN HOMESTEADING PROJECT HAS A STRONG PRACTICE OF DOCUMENTATION. WHY IS IT SO IMPORTANT FOR YOU TO MAINTAIN THIS PRACTICE?

An essential characteristic of the Urban Homesteading Project's interventions is their ephemeral and process-oriented nature; therefore documenting them becomes essential. That's the only way we can revisit a project and share it with other people. But what is most important to us is the experience itself; the documentation of it is secondary. During these events we are so invested into participating, organizing, and experiencing what is going on, that the documentation becomes very spontaneous, sometimes irregular. The character of these experiences would be very different if they were planned for their documentation.



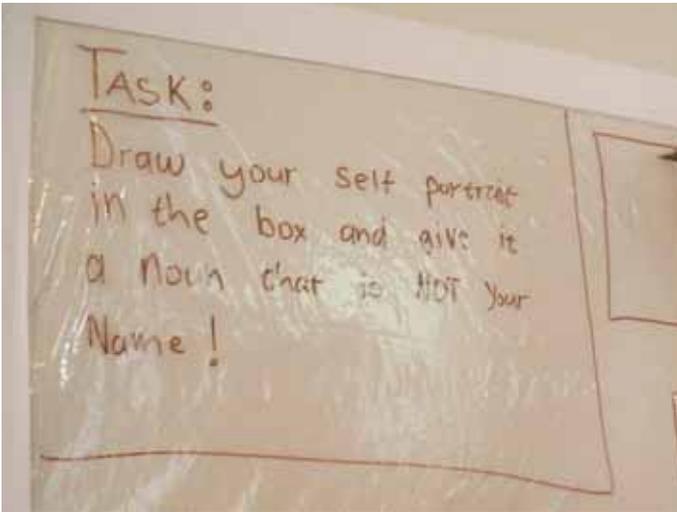
Urban Homesteading Project, 'Summer Homestead', multiple installation and detail views taken over the 9 week period



The Project Wall

Polyethylene plastic sheeting and markers
8' x 3'

Task: Draw your self-portrait in the box and give it a noun that is not your name!



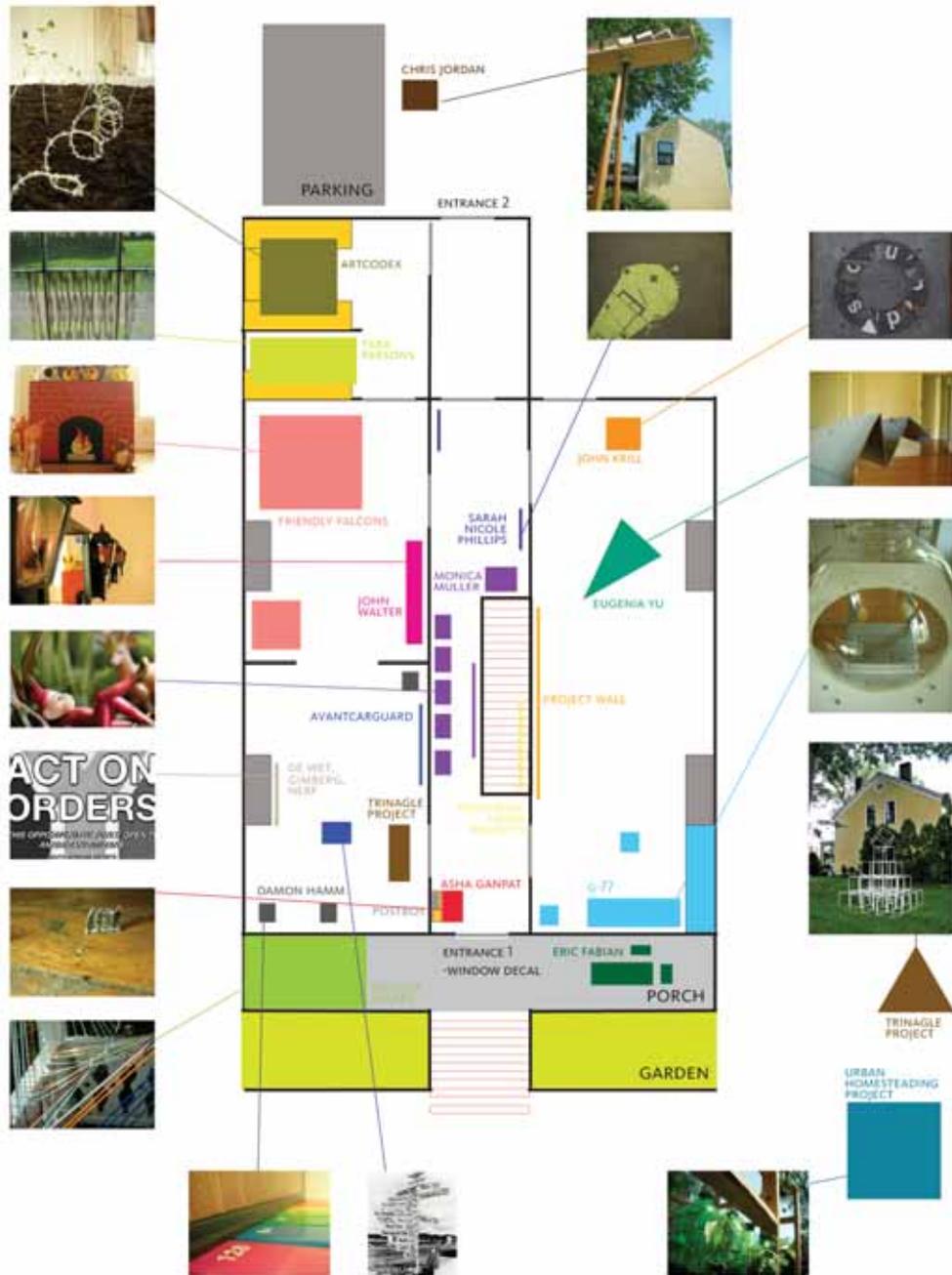
Johan Kritzing setting up the frame work and task for the 'Project Wall', multiple installation and detail views



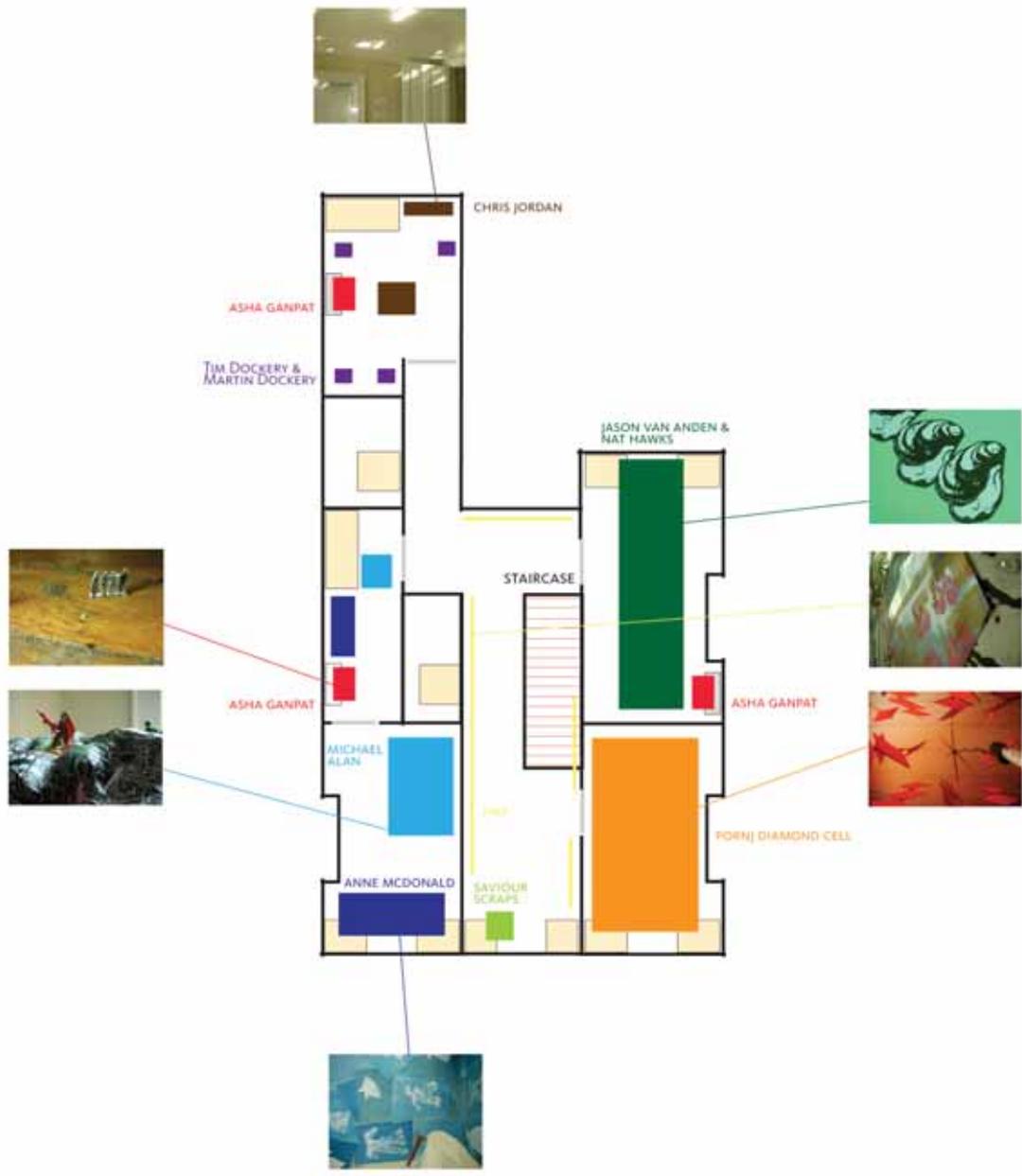


'Project Wall' at the end of the show, installation and detail views





First Floor Layout



Second Floor Layout

FIGMENT* 2008

by David Koren

Executive Producer and Founder of FIGMENT

FIGMENT is a free annual celebration of creative culture on Governors Island in New York Harbor. The mission of FIGMENT is to provide a forum for community-based participatory art and experience. FIGMENT strives to build community among artists and participants, to foster the participatory arts in New York City, and to demonstrate a vision for the future of Governors Island as an international arts destination. A broad spectrum of participatory arts and activities are represented at FIGMENT, including sculpture, performance, music, installation, dance, costuming, and activities.

FIGMENT began in 2007, with a one-day event that attracted 60 art projects and over 2,800 participants. In 2008, FIGMENT was a three-day event for over 10,000 people, the largest single event ever held on the island. The 2008 event featured over 200 registered art projects. In addition, FIGMENT created a number of special projects on the island in 2008, including Emergence, a participatory arts exhibition in Building 14 featuring works created by over 30 artists or arts collectives; Voyeur, a photography exhibition of images taken at the FIGMENT event; and the City of Dreams Mini-Golf Course, a 9-hole miniature golf course built by 9 different artists or groups of artists.

FIGMENT aspires to build a community around the arts on Governors Island. With the high cost of living in our city

and the difficulty of “breaking in” to the commercial art world, New York City can be a daunting place for artists. FIGMENT is created by a large network of artists, curators, performers, and other creative individuals motivated by a genuine desire to share their work with each other and create a unique experience for the public.

One of FIGMENT’s principles is the “decommodification” of the experience of coming to the event. Given the high cost of everything in New York, the event is remarkable in that it is totally free. FIGMENT is a social and creative experience uninterrupted by commercial sponsorships, transactions, or advertising. Selling goods or services, soliciting donations and advertising are not permitted. FIGMENT accepts no corporate sponsorships, and is funded exclusively by grants and individual donations.

FIGMENT is a project of Action Arts League, and is produced by a coalition of volunteers in partnership with The Pure Project. FIGMENT 2008 was made possible in part with public funds from the Manhattan Community Arts Fund, supported by the New York City Department of Cultural Affairs and administered by the Lower Manhattan Cultural Council. In addition, Emergence and the City of Dreams Mini-Golf Course were partially funded with grants from the Black Rock Arts Foundation.



image © Mary Campbell



image © Rosemarie Diaz



image © Robert Bose

'Victorian Volley' by Patrick Grenier, 'Sitting and Knitting' by Mary Campbell, 'Skyline' by Robert Bose (top left to right),
City of Dreams Mini Golf, performers and hoopers, and 'Starlight on the Island' by Thea Lanzisero Monier-Williams (bottom left to right)



image © Wrethced Rhapsody



image © Wrethced Rhapsody



image © Thea Lanzisero Monie-Williams

THANKS & ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

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The Black Rock Arts Foundation is proud to acknowledge the Emergence project as a 2008 Grant recipient. Since 2002, the Black Rock Arts Foundation has provided grants to artists to support interactive artwork and performances across the country. The Emergence project furthers the mission of the Black Rock Arts Foundation to inspire civic engagement through interactive art. BRAF is pleased to support Emergence in making innovative, collaborative and groundbreaking artworks accessible to new audiences. To learn about the Black Rock Arts Foundation, please visit: www.blackrockarts.org

FIGMENT*



PURE
PROJECT

Lower
Manhattan
Cultural
Council



EMERGENCE - Creative Pioneers in Uncharted Territory
Featuring 30 Artists & Collectives

Building 14 (Commanders House), Governors Island,
New York City Harbor
May 31st - July 26, 2008

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See our online catalogue at - www.emergenceshow.org

FIGMENT* is an annual celebration of creative culture on Governors Island in New York Harbor. It provides an open forum for artists, helps build a creative community and fosters participatory and public art. A broad spectrum of arts are represented, including sculpture, performance, music, installation, dance, costuming and activities. It is free and open to the public.

As a free, non-profit volunteer-planned event starring a legion of artists eager to share, FIGMENT hopes to advance social and personal transformation through creativity.

To participate / support FIGMENT* - www.figmentnyc.org

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