



SALT LAKE ART CENTER
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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

October 5, 2007

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Eight artists transform Bay Area trash into something new after gaining insight at “The Dump.”

Salt Lake City - Environmentalism isn't just for hippies anymore. Conservation and sustainability have become main stream issues, and now it is commonplace to consider saving energy and resources right along with time and money. Recycling is a central component of this ecological and social phenomenon, and as scientists and pundits theorize as to how to make the most of what's available, artists working at a Bay Area waste facility are rethinking what it means to “reuse.”

Salt Lake Art Center curator Jim Edwards has chosen works by eight artists who have completed a half-year residency at “The Art of Recycling” within the last six years to comprise ***SF Recycled***. The artists included, as well as the dates of their residencies, are as follows: Daphne Ruff, 2001 and 2002; Dee Hibbert-Jones, 2002; Mark Faigenbaum, Mike Farruggia, Andrew Junge, Nomi Talisman, 2005; James Gouldthorpe, 2006; and Bessie Kunath, 2007.

“The Art of Recycling” is a unique Artist in Residence program run out of SF Recycling and Disposal, a 44-acre waste transfer station and recycling hub. Since its inception in 1990, over 60 artists have participated in the project, working at a studio space alongside recycling facilities and the Public Disposal Area (known affectionately among San Franciscans as “the Dump”).

Using materials that would have otherwise ended up in landfills or recycling plants, artists create works that challenge viewers to consider conservation and consumption in a different way.

Unfolding (1998), by Mark Faigenbaum, is a mandala created with old illustrations and bingo cards. A mandala is traditionally used in various eastern religions as a depiction of the universe, often containing a deity. Faigenbaum's choice of materials may suggest that our social system, based on the primacy of the free market, is ultimately a risky game of chance.

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Reimagining and manipulating discarded objects into works of art might succeed in reframing the environmental situation where statistics and sermons have failed. Edwards writes, "The overriding message implied by this exhibition is that we live in a capitalist-consumer society, and that the objects populating our homes are eventually abandoned in favor of other, newer products. What we do with our throw-away consumerism is becoming a conservation nightmare as landfills bury hundreds of tons of refuse on a daily basis."

But far from brooding on a hopeless outcome, the artists have chosen simply to take another look at what most people might ignore and encourage visitors to do the same. Edwards muses optimistically that, "In the world of aesthetics, such objects can be retrieved and invested with new meaning."

This fine sentiment is made manifest in Andrew Junge's *Pandora's Box* (2005). Though the title references a mythical box of sorrows let loose upon the world, the word revealed under the rusty tool box's lid is HOPE. Junge might be suggesting that even in the ruins of a junk yard, the right eyes can see an encouraging future.

By creating works both whimsical and thought-provoking, these artists invite us to see what was tossed aside with new eyes. From the women's purses made by Daphne Ruff to the interactive electronic piece *Letter*, the result of a collaboration between Dee Hibbert-Jones and Nomi Talisman, *SF Recycled* offers an interesting meditation on what happens when materiality, aesthetics and social concerns collide.

SF Recycled will be on exhibit at the Salt Lake Art Center from October 20, 2007 through January 26, 2008. Please join us for the opening reception on October 19, 2007, from 6 to 9 p.m. Curator Jim Edwards will present an Art Talk that evening at 7 p.m., which will also include two of the *SF Recycled* featured artists, James Gouldthorpe and Mark Faigenbaum.

SF Recycled is made possible through generous support from the Andy Warhol Foundation for the Visual Arts, George S. and Dolores Doré Eccles Foundation, Cultural Vision Fund, Weyerhaeuser Company Foundation, Recycling Coalition of Utah, 3form, John and Marcia Price Family Foundation, Utah Arts Council, Alternative Visions, and anonymous donors.

Admission to the Art Center is always FREE.

The Salt Lake Art Center is located at 20 South West Temple. Call 328-4201 or visit www.slartcenter.org

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