

STUDENT SERIES:
CCA SPRING 2005

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An introductory note

What follows are project descriptions written by 1st and 2nd year students from the California College of the Arts MFA program (Spring 2005). Even though the students share an interest in interactivity in a non-art space, interestingly, they come from a wide range of departments: drawing & painting, film & video, photography, printmaking, textile, and wood. I got to know of their projects through working together as part of their studio practice curriculum and all of the projects herein either commenced or were completed in the 2004/2005 academic year.

My purpose in bringing together these student-written descriptions and issuing them as an Antinomian Press publication is to let others know about some of the project work being conducted by students in and around Northern California. It should also be noted that the CCA student interest has been sufficient enough to result in a new department within the MFA program entitled "Social Practices" which will officially commence in September 2005. Although I am involved in the new department and think it important to respond to students' interests, I must also voice some ambivalence about trying to begin an organized program around an art activity that, by its very nature, takes much of its strength from its independence from a known educational or institutional program. We will see how it goes and please look for future Student Series publications from the Antinomian Press and this new program.

Ben Kinmont
Sebastopol
August 2005

Japhy's¹ Hunger for Peace

This year's President's Day marked the third year straight that I did a four-day fast that began on February 21, 2005 and continued through February 24, 2005. During these days I helped out at the San Francisco Rescue Mission and East Bay Food Not Bombs. I invited every congressional representative from the State of California, as well as Mayor Gavin Newsom, to join me during these days.

The project examines the relationship between food and war and is not meant to push partisan agendas. It is also designed, as much of my work is, to explore the notion that anyone can do this. By working within established structures that are easily accessible to the public, questions can be raised as to why more people don't get engaged in these humanist activities.

Michael Wallace



¹ The name "Japhy" comes from a character in Jack Kerouac's *The Dharma Bums*.

Idea Art For Kids!

I am currently working on an idea art lesson planner to help teach kids contemporary art. There are 149 plans in total. All are based on performance, project-based, and conceptual art of the past 40 years. I am trying to perform each lesson plan in order to see to it that they are accomplishable. I plan on publishing the finished products and distributing them to schools, art teachers, and the children's section in various art museum stores.

This collection of lesson plans was created to give teachers a set of interesting and engaging projects to help kids associate themselves with some of the current themes of contemporary art. Some lessons are adapted projects from previous artists while others are generated from my interest in radicalizing the methods and goals of future art education. I have divided the plans into categories, some of which are: drawing, photography, instruction art, conversations, curatorial, endurance, site-specific, lists and diagrams, mail art, earthworks, lazy art, portraiture, and phenomena. Each section will be printed individually as the projects are tested and completed by kids ranging in ages from 8-18.

Too often it is seen that modernist art practice is the main focus in elementary schools, high schools, and even some colleges. The art world has changed drastically since the 1960's. It is a shame that young students – for the most part – are being taught an old form of art; making the same Santa Claus every Christmas to fulfill their art requirements. It is time for learning to move outside of its own box, while art practices continually move away from the autonomous white one. With these plans I would like to show that idea art can be unpretentious, fun, and a good way to get out of the classroom – in order to learn more about the applicable and invigorating environment that is experienced everyday in a world with complex systems, relations, and ideas.

Mark Rodriguez

Trading Spaces

For this project I am trading studios with other people so that I can do their work and they can do mine for a set period of time. This process is a result of my interest in generating my own work without doing it myself, and seeing how other people interact with my ideas and art practice. I am equally excited about working with other peoples' work and investigating their interests and artistic habits.

Mark Rodriguez

Pep Talks of the Susan O'Malley Research Team

The Susan O'Malley Research Team's social research, products and services aim to ask questions such as: "What is the state of pep and optimism in our society?" "What are efficient and goal-oriented ways to inspire?" "How can an interaction between people be physically recorded?" Headquartered in San Francisco, California, the team uses the minutia of every day living to inform their studies.

Pep Talks are one service provided by the Susan O'Malley Research Team; the pep squad members are Susan O'Malley and Christina Amini. The Official Pep Talk is a free service open to anyone who wants words of inspiration. A hybrid life coaching, cheerleading, pop-psychology and personal intuition, the pep talk serves to allow individuals to express concerns and questions to the Pep Talk Squad (PTS). In response, the PTS will write, read and give an "Official Pep Talk," At the closing of the session the PTS gives a cheer, in order to further inspire its recipient.

You may have a virtual Pep Talk by emailing us at PepTalkSquad@gmail.com.



Susan O'Malley & Christina Amini

Bubble Gum Conversations

The *Bubble Gum Conversations Project* uses chewed bubble gum to document conversations and interactions that took place in Susan O'Malley's research headquarters. The Research Team was interested in exploring how an interaction, such as a conversation, could be physically recorded. Because it is chewed, bubble gum takes many shapes, colors and forms. Additionally, chewing bubble gum produces a rhythmic motion that enhances the ability to focus. Chewing raises the heartbeat, which causes more oxygen and nutrients to be pumped in the brain. After each of these interactions, the chewed gum was contained in a clear plastic box, as a physical reminder of the interaction.



Susan O'Malley

The Gates Project

I laid-out hand dyed t-shirts, bags and images on a bench under Christo and Jeanne-Claude's Gates in Central Park, New York. Passersby were invited to design their own shirt that I would make and send them.

Each participant filled out a bag with their name and address, took the shirt of their choice, as well as any and as many images as they chose. They could mark where they wanted the images to be printed on their t-shirt using the diagrams on each bag. They put the images and shirt inside the bag and then I made each shirt to their specifications and sent it to them.

With this project people become collaborators, active rather than passive viewers who end up with a one of a kind shirt that they've helped to create. The shirt becomes a souvenir and impacts the memory of their experience with the Gates.

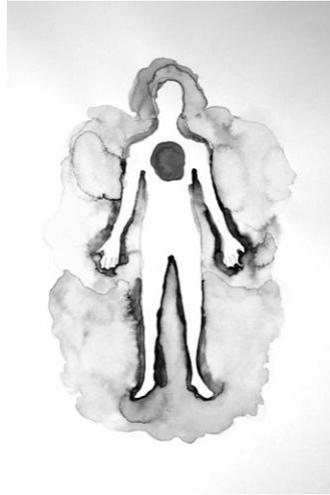
43 people participated and 42 have received their shirts; one went missing and will be made from the participant's memory and descriptions to me.

Ali Pembleton

Aura Portraits

Aura Portraits began when I placed an advertisement on Craigslist and in the San Francisco Chronicle newspaper: Artist seeking sitters to paint their aura portraits. Interested? Meet at Huntington Park, across from Grace Cathedral (California & Taylor). Sunday March 21, 12-5pm.

This piece is a series of works in water-based media in which I attempted to paint the auras of my subjects, implicating my own hand in the structures of belief that I established. In attempting to interpret other people's auras, I relied first on the belief that auras actually exist, and second on the role of the artist as an agent expressing "truth." I do not consider my portraits ironic in any way; they are a sincere attempt to capture the paranormal. However, I leave it up to viewers to judge how to interpret their veracity, and my role as an interpreting medium. While creating these paintings, I had conversations with the sitters, all of whom were strangers. I was interested in whether it was possible to have an intimate experience with a stranger, and I found that to be possible and true.



Lori Gordon

I Like Who I Am When I'm With You

My exploration of belief has led me to mundane acts, such as the simple gesture of giving people hugs. *In I Like Who I Am When I'm With You*, I stood still in a public subway station for sixty minutes and hugged someone I know. I wanted to explore the power of human connection, the belief that interacting with other humans through receiving hugs from them enhances our lives. It began as a nice, comforting physical expression of understanding and acceptance, but by the end of the hug it became physically grueling and even painful. Through this performance and its subsequent screenings, I encourage viewers to question their own concerns and desires for intimacy.



Lori Gordon in collaboration with Virginia Kleker

Fog Food

Fog Food was a collaboration between Joseph del Pesco and myself at the de Young Art Center. It grew out of a situation: a storefront located at the corner of 26th Avenue and Irving Street in San Francisco's Sunset District—temporary home to the de Young Art Center's artist-in-residency program. The storefront is easily overlooked, situated as it is, between the heterogeneous vibrancy of a long established commercial strip (predominantly Asian American) and the relative quiet of the surrounding residential architecture. The blocks between 19th and 27th Avenues offer banks, cafes, florists, grocery stores, housewares etc.—people going about their daily business. There are also an abundance of restaurants: Chinese, Vietnamese, Japanese, and Thai, but also a kosher deli, an Irish pub, a falafel house, a pizza place, and a hamburger joint. All these are within walking (or in our case, cycling) distance of the Art Center.



The proximity of diverse cuisine and the relative invisibility of the Art Center formed the impetus for Fog Food—an effort to visibly link the activities of the Art Center with the activities of the surrounding neighborhood. Fog Food had two major components: a “restaurant” and “guest artist” projects.

The first component consisted of the storefront space converted into dining and food preparation areas; a sparse but distinctive visual identity; and the simple idea (not so simple in practice) that all the food we served could be ordered as “take-out” from the local restaurants, retrieved on bicycle, and re-plated for our “customers”. This first component was the linking device between Art Center and neighborhood—the membrane through which osmosis could take place.

The second component—the guest artists: Jason Mortara, Ben Riesman, Mads Lynnerup, and Jackie Sumell (one each week, in that order, for the length of the project) were invited to develop individual projects within the larger parameters of Fog Food. In addition we asked each artist to develop a menu for the week culled from the menus of the local restaurants and to work at the restaurant as waiters (essentially working for tips) during the week of their project. The results were as diverse as the food that appeared on their menus.

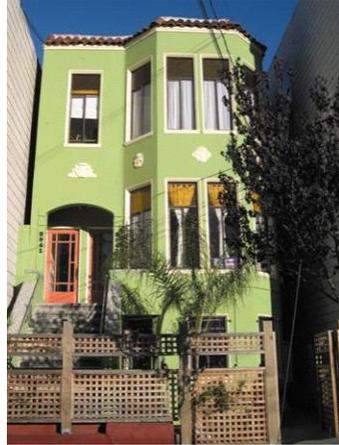
After we “opened for business” the project took on a life of its own. The artists’ projects, ranging from Mortara’s subtle library of local video artist; to Riesman’s interactive, carnivalesque games with food; to Lynnerup’s oversized take-out containers-as-seating; to Sumell’s political and satirical “news paper”, gave the restaurant a quality of shifting indeterminacy and surprise. This quality was reflected in Fog Food’s operating procedures—especially apparent as the restaurant got busy, and perhaps best described as a form of physical comedy.

Fog Food was open for lunch during the month of February, 2005 and served over 300 customers.

Scott Oliver

In-home Project

In-home Project is a site-specific art project developed with Chris Colin and Amy Standen for their home, located at 2943 Harrison Street in San Francisco California. The project began in November 2004 with the signing of a contract that defined the terms of the project and the responsibilities of the participants. The contract made explicit the relationship between the “artist” and the “inhabitants,” clarifying the autonomy of both parties while laying out a plan for greater intimacy. Significantly no money was to be exchanged during the course of In-home Project. The goal was to create artworks that responded in some way to Chris and Amy’s lives through the physical conditions of their domestic environment: the spaces and objects that embodied their home. Observation, discussion and interviews led to a series of proposals for artworks most of which Chris and Amy agreed to.



Only two of the proposals were “realized.” The first, “Blockages/Passages,” consolidated the various bookcases in the house into a single (collaged) bookcase that occupied the doorway between the two front rooms. The new bookcase drew attention to the original architecture of the rooms. It was open to both sides so that one could see through the shelves from one room to the other. This also exposed the fore edge of the books—highlighting their materiality. For the second project, “Mystery Closet,” We opened a previously sealed closet under the third story stair—a hingeless, knobless door that had been plastered shut. Inside we found only a rough, but serviceable closet from a bygone time and stale air. One mystery opened onto another: why would anybody seal-up a perfectly good closet? Simultaneous to the opening of the mystery closet Chris and Amy decided to sell their house. Thus the decision was made to restore the closet to a functioning storage space.

These two “artworks” along with eight proposals for In-home Project were exhibited in the house while it was on the market in April, 2005.

Scott Oliver

Ask a Stranger

I set up a booth in public places with a lot of foot traffic. A sign at the top read "ASK." Below that, moveable letters spelled out, "A LIBERAL JEW" on a marquee. I sat in the booth and answered questions as best I could. "Would you take a turn in the booth: You can change the marquee to describe yourself anyway you like," I would say. Participants would man the booth until they wanted me to take over again.

Dave Stein



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