

OSILAS GALLERY

CONCORDIA COLLEGE—NEW YORK
171 WHITE PLAINS ROAD • BRONXVILLE, NY 10708

NURTURING NATURE: *ARTISTS ENGAGE THE ENVIRONMENT*

On view February 10-April 16, 2011

Reception and Gallery Talk, Thursday, February 10, 7PM

ARTIST BIOS AND IMAGES: *additional images available upon request*

Artists: Eva Bakkeslett, Vaughn Bell, Susan Benarcik, Michele Brody Jackie Brookner, Linda Bryne, Xavier Cortada, Sonja Hinrichsen, Basia Irland, William Meyer, Maria Michails, Roy Staab, Joel Tauber

Curated by Amy Lipton, *Director, ecoartspace New York City and Patricia Miranda, Director, OSilas Gallery, Concordia College*

EVA BAKKESLETT



Still from “Alchemy – the Poetics of Bread”, DVD_(4x3 VIDEO), 2007

Eva Bakkeslett is an artist and cultivator in the field of arts & ecology. She sees her work as planting seeds to cultivate environmental change that reenergizes our engagement with and awareness of the earth. Her passion lies in the interface between nature and culture. Using any suitable medium she spends time in playful exploration revealing the subtle and invisible wonders of life through any suitable medium. Her work is often contextualised through interactive community events to inspire and engage people to sense, feel, think and act.

Eva holds an MA in Arts & Ecology from Dartington College of Arts in Devon, England. She is showing, lecturing and performing her work nationally and internationally. She co-curated the big social sculpture event *Gentle Actions – art/ecology/actions* in Oslo in 2010. Her film *Alchemy – the poetics of bread* has been shown in art shows and film festivals all over the world. It was shown at MoMA, New York, in 2009 and was awarded the Jury Price at the Norwegian Contemporary Art show: *Den Nordnorske Kunstutstilling* the same year.

VAUGHN BELL



Village Green (Personal Biosphere), 2008, acrylic, soil, plants, hardware, photo: Kevin Kennefick

Vaughn Bell creates interactive projects and immersive environments that deal with how we relate to our environment. She has exhibited her sculpture, installation, performance, video and public projects internationally. Most recently, Vaughn created a commission for Massachusetts Museum of Contemporary Art and another for the Edith Russ Site for New Media Art in Oldenburg, Germany. Her work has been featured in *Artnews*, *Afterimage*, and *Arcade Journal*, among others. Vaughn received her MFA from the Studio for Inter-related Media at Massachusetts College of Art in Boston, MA and her

undergraduate degree from Brown University. She currently is based in Seattle.

SUSAN BENARCIK



Susan Benarcik is a contemporary installation artist based in New York City, born and raised in Wilmington, Delaware. Her work is exhibited across the country in both sculpture parks and museums. An installation made entirely of forsythia limbs entitled “Dwellings” is currently on exhibition at the Tyler Arboretum, and multiple installations are featured in the summer program at Desiron, a furniture showroom in SoHo, NY. Some of the artist's recent solo exhibitions include a solo show at 125 Maiden Lane in Lower Manhattan, a site responsive installation at the Brooklyn Botanic Garden in November of 2007, and the artist's mixed media installation entitled “Liminal”, which received an award for Outstanding Craft Exhibition at the Delaware Center for Contemporary Art.

The artist has a Masters degree in printmaking from Cranbrook Academy of Art, and a Bachelor of Fine Arts degree, with highest distinction from Rosemont College. Post-graduate fellowships include; Houston's Museum of Fine Arts Core Program and The Center For Emerging Visual Artists (CFEVA) program in Philadelphia. The artist continues to design, install and moderate site-responsive living installations, and attends various artist residency programs, including Edward Albee's Barn in Long Island, The Digital Stone Project in Mercerville NJ, and I-Park, a sculpture park and residency program in Connecticut.

MICHELE BRODY



Grass Skirt Sentinels, 2009, Lace fabric, copper pipe, grass seeds, light bulb, galvanized steel reservoir, water, pump

With a BA from Sarah Lawrence College in 1989 and an MFA from the School of the Art

Institute of Chicago in 1994, **Michele Brody** has created site-specific, mixed-media installations at the Atelier-galerie d'Art Contemporain in Arras, France; Museo de Arte y Diseño Contemporaneo in San Jose, Costa Rica; Dina4 Projekte in Munich, Germany; Temple Judea Museum in Elkins Park, PA; as well as Chashama, Littlejohn Contemporary and the Lower East Side Tenement Museum in New York City. She has been the recipient of grants from the Mid Atlantic Arts Foundation, Lower

Manhattan Cultural Council, Pollock/Krasner Foundation, NYFA, and New York State Council on the Arts.

She has been awarded residencies at Skowhegan, the Headlands Center for the Arts and the Marie Walsh Sharpe Foundation. Ms. Brody has completed three permanent public art commissions installed in New York and Texas. The success of her work thrives on the interaction with new communities and environments. Much of her portfolio focuses on the creation of sustainable sculptures that support the growth of plants within the alternative materials of recycled paper, fabric, lace, stainless steel and copper pipe. During the course of exhibition, full-room environments that include walls of sprouting paper, skirts weighed down with pockets of sprouts, and glass-enclosed mini ecosystems, alter and transform as they go through a full life cycle. To support the propagation of these living projects, she incorporates a mix of unique lighting, water irrigation systems, natural and recorded sounds to evoke a visceral encounter. The experience of this ephemeral process represents a metaphor for understanding how we live with change while trying to manage the delicacy of memory within the constant flux of life.

JACKIE BROOKNER



Tongue Lounge, Soil on Wood, 1993

Jackie Brookner is an ecological artist and writer who works collaboratively with ecologists, engineers, design professionals, communities and policy makers on water remediation/public art projects for parks, wetlands, rivers, and urban stormwater runoff. Her Biosculptures™ are vegetated water filtration systems in parks, public recreation sites, and along waterways in West Palm Beach, FL; San Jose, CA; Cincinnati, OH; Salo, Finland; and near Dresden, Germany

that create destinations, restore urban habitat, and reclaim the undervalued resources of stormwater and other polluted water.

Brookner's whole systems approach identifies nodal points where social, cultural, and ecological revitalization meet. In her planning projects throughout the US and abroad, and in her work with the National Park Service in the Pacific Northwest, takes an intensive approach to community process and participation that goes beyond consensus to activate collective creative agency and maximum potential. Her work fosters sustainable watershed practices through environmental education, community empowerment, and ecological restoration.

Recent solo exhibitions include "*Native Tongues*" at The Miro Foundation in Barcelona, Spain and "*Of Earth and Cotton*". She was Guest Editor of the 1992 *Art Journal* issue on "*Art and Ecology*." Her essays can be found in *M/E/A/N/I/N/G*, in *Natural Reality/Artistic Positions Between Nature and Culture*, and in *Cultures and Settlements*, (Intellect Books, 2003). She lectures internationally, and has taught at the University of Pennsylvania, Harvard Univ. and Parsons School of Design, where she currently teaches. She is the recipient of numerous awards including The National Endowment for the Arts, The New York Foundation for the Arts, The Nancy Gray Foundation for Art in the Environment, and The Trust for Mutual Understanding. She completed her B.A. at Wellesley College and holds M.A. and A.B.D. degrees from Harvard University. She currently lives and works in New York. Brookner gives an overview of her thinking in "Urban Rain", a book focused on her project in San Jose, CA, published by ORO editions in 2009.

LINDA BYRNE



Nets and Rope; 2006, litho crayon on paper, 74x48"

Linda Byrne was born and raised in New York City by first-generation Americans from Irish and Italian immigrants. Because that Old World heritage was not celebrated in her family, she felt a disconnect from her ancestry, an absence of history that was to spur her later quest for self-identity and connectivity with others. Linda majored in Fine Art at Parsons School of Design, but dropped out to travel around the country and forge her own history. In the years that followed, she continued working on her craft through self-training and by taking courses at art schools and academic venues, including the Art Students League in New York and the Academy de Bell Arts in Barcelona, Spain.

Linda has been showing her art consistently in juried and curated exhibitions since 1992. Recent shows include "Upcycle" through the Newark Arts Council and "Repurposed Rethought" at the Ocean City Arts Center, both in New Jersey, and at Green Spaces, in conjunction with the premiere screening of the documentary "End of the Line," in New York City. She was invited to participate in the 2009-2010 traveling exhibition, "Trade Show," conceived and curated by the artist Anna Stump, going from California to Turkey. Linda collaborated with the poet and sound artist, Maggie Dubris, in the multimedia installation "Vanishing Birds Project," shown in Pittsburgh and New York. Over the years, she has received 5 artist residencies, and was the recipient of a Jerome Foundation Grant and the Barbara Hurd and Stephen Dunn Sculpture Award. Her work has been favorably reviewed in several publications including the Philadelphia City Paper, the New York Press, and the New York Times.

Linda, along with several other artists, created the Matzo files, a flat file and small works gallery space for 200 artists, located in Streit's, a working matzo factory on New York's Lower East Side. The venture lasted for eighteen months in 2004-2005 and afforded Linda the experience of running a not-for-profit organization and helping under-represented artists.

XAVIER CORTADA



Cyprian Wild Sheep; part of 180 endangered animals Eastern Hemisphere installation, drawings: each 9x12", installation 9 x 21.5'

Xavier Cortada has created art installations at the North Pole (as a NYFA sponsored artist, 2008) and South Pole (through the National Science Foundation, 2007) to help address environmental issues at every point in between. This year, Cortada has presented eco-art interventions in Finland, Latvia and across the United States in Albuquerque, Grand Rapids, Miami, Salem (MA), St. Petersburg and Tampa.

The Miami artist has been commissioned to create art for the White House, the Florida Supreme Court, Miami City Hall, Miami-Dade County Hall, the Museum of Florida History, the Miami Art Museum, and the Frost Art Museum. Cortada's work is also in the permanent collection of The World Bank. Cortada is also known for his international collaborative public art projects. These include International AIDS Conference murals in Switzerland and South Africa, peace murals in Northern Ireland and Cyprus, and child welfare murals in Bolivia and Panama.

Corporations such as General Mills, Nike, Heineken and Hershey's have commissioned his art. Publishers like McDougal and Random House have featured it in school textbooks and publications. Cortada, who was born in Albany, New York and grew up in Miami, holds degrees from the University of Miami College of Arts and Sciences, Graduate School of Business and School of Law.

SONJA HINRICHSEN



Paradise Tree; environmental intervention, Spain, September 2008 photo prints (13"x18") and video.

Sonja Hinrichsen was born near Reutlingen, Germany, and graduated from the Academy of Art and Design in Stuttgart in sculpture (1997) and performance/video (1998). The recipient of a Merit scholarship she completed her MFA degree in New Genres at the San Francisco Art Institute in 2001. Her interactive thesis piece "*31 MUNI-Rides*" was awarded a McMillan Award.

Sonja has been in many group- and solo- exhibitions, including the Peeler Art Center at DePauw University in Illinois, Saarlaendisches Kuenstlerhaus in Saarbruecken, Germany and the *Around the Coyote Arts Festival* in Chicago. Sonja has won artist residency awards; at the Bemis Center for Contemporary Arts in Omaha, NE, Djerassi Artist Residency in California, Atlantic Center for the Arts in Florida, the Helene Wurlitzer Foundation and the Santa Fe Art Institute in New Mexico, Ucross Foundation in Wyoming, the McColl Center in Charlotte, NC, Valparaiso in Spain and the Taipei Artist Village in Taiwan.

BASIA IRLAND



“A Gathering of Waters; Boulder Creek, Continental Divide to Confluence” 2007, Recycled truck inner tubes, 47 water sample vials (one for each mile of Boulder Creek), beaver-cut aspen sticks, Canteen, Logbook, watershed maps, video documentary

Basia Irland is an author, poet, sculptor, installation artist, and activist who creates international water projects featured in her book, *Water Library*, University of New Mexico Press, 2007. The book focuses on projects the artist has created over the last thirty years in Africa, Canada, Europe, South America, Southeast Asia, and the United States. Through her work, Irland offers a creative understanding of water while examining how communities of people, plants, and animals rely on this vital element. Irland is Professor Emerita, Department of Art and Art History, University of New Mexico, where she established the Arts and Ecology Program. She often works with scholars from diverse disciplines building rainwater harvesting systems; connecting communities and fostering dialogue along the entire length of rivers; filming and producing water documentaries; and creating waterborne disease projects around the world, most recently in Egypt, Ethiopia, India, and Nepal. She is regularly commissioned to do river restoration projects.

Irland lectures and exhibits extensively and was the only artist (and the only woman) invited to participate in the Foundation for the Future’s International World Water Crisis Forum in Seattle, Washington, 2010. She is the recipient of over forty grants including a Senior Fulbright Research Award for Southeast Asia, Woodrow Wilson Foundation Fellowship Grant, and a National Oceanic and Atmospheric Research Grant. Her work is in collections around the world and has been included in books published in Germany, England, Switzerland, and the U.S.

MARIA MICHAILS



Crop Houses, 2011, Duratrans film transparencies, plexiglass, aluminum, wood, steel, LED lights. Dimensions variable.

Maria Michails is a multi-disciplinary artist whose art practice bridges the sciences, engineering and architecture. Her human-powered mechanisms are the nucleus of interactive installations that parallel human expenditure with human consumption to address broader ecological and social issues specific to place. She's a recipient of numerous creative and research grants and her work has been exhibited in North America and Europe. Recent residency fellowships include Vermont Studio Center, Santa Fe Art Institute, Kimmel Harding Nelson Center for the Arts, and Sculpture Space in Utica, NY. Ms. Michails has taught foundation studies in art at Arizona State University and University of Manitoba, Winnipeg. She earned an MFA from Arizona State University (2008), and a BFA from Concordia University in Montreal (1996).

Michails projects contextually link industrial resource use and consumptive human behavior with current environmental problems. Using a multitude of mediums for each installation, there is, nonetheless, a focus on

a specific object that functions as a motif and is chosen for its nostalgic and historical reference. The shift toward interactive, and most recently, human-powered energy production using such motifs, is to bring the body into direct relationship with the object. Made with re-purposed mechanical and bicycle parts, the human-powered mechanisms require a mindful, physical effort to create the energy needed to power the artwork. Essentially, the installations invite community members to activate the work for one another.

WILLIAM MEYER



The Ideal Suburban Home: Green Rickshaw Project

William Meyer is an ecological artist and professional landscape designer whose work is influenced by architecture, natural systems and non-western culture. He is the co-founder of Amanaka's Amazon Network and Worldview, two environmental organizations established to give voice to local people's initiatives and empower students to think critically about ecological systems. William's projects are conceived of in the universal language of ecology and realized through social practice. The work emerges as interventions

in mainstream technology, employing bio-mimicry with a machine aesthetic. To realize larger projects, he often works collectively.

Currently, William is engaged in urban ecology and sustainable cultural initiatives while exploring new directions in collaborative practice with the nsumi collective and as a design fellow at NYU's X-Design Lab + Environmental Health Clinic. He has guided dozens of ecological restoration projects and experimental landscapes through design and implementation in the Hudson Valley and New York City. William's work has recently been shown at the Neuberger Museum, Manhattanville College, and the Boulder Museum of Contemporary art. His pursuits have been published in *Art in America*, *The New York Times*, *The L.A. Times*, *The Journal of Ecological Restoration* and *Zing Magazine* as well as many exhibition catalogs.

ROY STAAB



BIG ROUND, Aug 18, 2008 epson archival print

Roy Staab's earth-sensitive site-specific installations use locally available materials and result in ephemeral earthworks that eventually devolve back into nature. Since 1979 he has been documenting these works with his own

camera, and the photographs have been exhibited in numerous museums and galleries world-wide.

Staab has been invited to create installations internationally in Canada, Denmark, Finland, Italy, Japan, Korea, Taiwan and Brazil. In the U.S. he has built site-specific pieces in Central Park, NYC, at various locations along the Hudson River in NY; Eastern Long Island, NY; Cape Cod, MA; Los Angeles, CA and along the Schuylkill River in Philadelphia PA. His works stand out for their structural and geometric concerns. Set into nature, they provide a rational counter-structure that edifies the viewer. The effect is one of holding a mirror to nature, reminding us of the context within which the artwork resides.

Originally from the Midwest, Staab has lived in Paris and New York, and now lives in Milwaukee, WI. He has received various awards including a Japan/American Artist Exchange Creative Artist Fellowship, Pollack/Krasner Grant, Gottlieb Foundation Award and the Joan Mitchell Award. Staab was educated at the Layton School of Art, Milwaukee Institute of Technology and the University of Wisconsin in Milwaukee.

Staab's paintings, drawings and photographs can be found in the collections of the Musée d'art Moderne and Le Fonds National d'art Contemporain in Paris, the Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York, and the Milwaukee Art Museum. He recently had a traveling retrospective organized by the INOVA Gallery University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee titled *Roy Staab: Four Seasons/Four Corners*. Other recent exhibitions took place at Art Omi Sculpture Park, Ghent, New York; *EarthArt*, Royal Botanical Gardens, Hamilton, Ontario, Canada; Marbaek Beach near Esbjerg, Denmark, *Energy Center*, Guandu International Outdoor Sculpture Festival, Taipei, Taiwan; *Invasive Species*, Cheng-Long Wetlands International Environmental Art Project, Taiwan; EcoArts Festival, Manayunk, Philadelphia, PA; *Eau Claire Currents*, University of Wisconsin-Eau Claire, Wisconsin and in 2011 he will participate in an outdoor exhibition, *Sculptures Around*, Leogang, Austria.

JOEL TAUBER



Laying with tree, digital print

Joel Tauber received his MFA in art from Art Center College of Design and his BA in art history and sculpture from Yale University. His work has been shown in solo art exhibitions at a number of locations, including Susanne Vielmetter Los Angeles Projects in LA and Galerie Adamski in Berlin as well as Aachen, Germany. He has been included in numerous group art exhibitions including the 2004 and 2008 California Biennials at the Orange County Museum of Art; "The Gravity in Art" at the De Appel Centre For Contemporary Art in Amsterdam; and "Still Things Fall From the Sky" at the California Museum of Photography. Film Festivals include the Sedona International Film Festival, San Francisco Documentary Festival, and the Downtown Film Festival - Los Angeles, where his movie, "Sick-Amour", was awarded "Best Green Film." Tauber won the 2007 Contemporary Collectors of Orange County Fellowship and the 2007-2008 CalArts / Alpert Ucross Residency Prize for Visual Arts. His work has been featured in numerous media outlets, including National Public Radio, Deutsche Welle / Deutschlandfunk radio, NBC local news, the Ovation Network, Swedish Television, ArtReview Magazine, The Design Magazine, ArtWeek, artUS Magazine, The Pasadena Star News, and The Los Angeles Times.