



Eureka!

The Eureka Fellowship Awards, 2005-2007

August 2 - September 20, 2008

Featuring Work by:

Chester Arnold
Thomas Chang
Amy Franceschini
Paul Kos
George Kuchar
Josh Lazcano
Mads Lynnerup
Lourdes Portillo
Rigo 23
Clare Rojas
Philip Ross
Chris Sollars

Talking Art: The Eureka Effect

September 11, 7-9 pm
Admission \$5/free for members

Join us in a conversation with Eureka Fellowship recipients to discuss the impact of this prestigious award.

Speakers include: Eureka recipients Thomas Chang, Philip Ross, Chris Sollars with Jack Walsh, Program Director Eureka Program, Fleishhacker Foundation.



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Eureka! represents a remarkable sampling of the vitality and distinctive character of the Bay Area's visual arts community featuring the 2005 – 2007 recipients of the Eureka Fellowship Award. The Bay Area's largest cash prize for individual artists, the Eureka Fellowship Awards are sponsored by the San Francisco-based Fleishhacker Foundation. Since 1986, Eureka Fellowships have recognized artistic excellence through these one-year awards. The awards are not tied to creating specific projects, but rather, help artists continue making art by supporting more uninterrupted creative time.

Eureka! reflects the ICA's shared commitment with the Fleishhacker Foundation to support Bay Area artists. The twelve fellowship winners were among 135 artists who applied from a candidate pool created by 58 local visual arts organizations, serving as nominators. The exhibition includes work by Chester Arnold, Thomas Chang, Amy Franceschini, Paul Kos, George Kuchar, Josh Lazcano, Mads Lynnerup, Lourdes Portillo, Rigo 23, Clare Rojas, Philip Ross, and Chris Sollars. Their creativity represents a wide range of the region's artistic talent, with work that is enormously varied in approach, subject and medium and reflects a broad cultural and stylistic diversity. The extraordinary talent of these recipients was recognized by the panel of three nationally known arts professionals who judged the artists' works, including Rita Gonzales, Assistant Curator of Special Exhibitions, Los Angeles County Museum of Art; James Jensen, Associate Director and Chief Curator, The Contemporary Museum in Honolulu; and Laurel Reuter, Director of the North Dakota Museum of Art.

Eureka! is supported in part by a generous grant from the Fleishhacker Foundation.

Chester Arnold

Chester Arnold's large-scale paintings are dense with detail and complex narratives. His most recent paintings continue his visual exploration into the detritus of modern civilization. And, while the imagery is apocryphal, he depicts darkness in a beautiful way.

Arnold's paintings draw inspiration from the old masters whose ominous imagery he encountered growing up in post World War II Germany. Arnold also credits his "ability to generate visual material spontaneously" to the fact that he did not watch television as a youth, but listened to the descriptive language of radio. While his painting style is representational, according to Arnold, he paints fiction, not fact.

Before the onslaught of natural disasters throughout the world, Arnold's images did seem exaggeratedly catastrophic. However, since the tsunami in the Far East, Hurricane Katrina in the southern United States, the recent floods in Iowa and the out-of-control wildfires currently burning in California, the imagery has become disquietingly reflective of the truth. It is difficult not to connect the imagery in *Dirty Laundry* – hundreds of pieces of clothing strewn in a dry riverbank, broken planks of wood, car tires, trash cans, and other miscellaneous debris – to the recent collective memory of New Orleans and Mississippi on the heels of hurricane Katrina. Might Arnold be commenting on our country's own "dirty laundry" and how the government has handled the devastating effects of that natural disaster?

Thomas Chang

For three years, Thomas Chang volunteered as a docent at Angel Island Immigration Station. During his tenure there, he came to hear the recurring questions and misunderstandings concerning the history of immigration and perceptions of ethnicity. In his series of photographs entitled *Orientalism*, Chang captures what he perceives as caricatures of "traditional" Chinese spaces. In particular, he poses questions about the representation of Asian culture in the contemporary American cultural landscape.

Chang focuses his camera on empty spaces: restaurants without diners, shopping malls devoid of shoppers, and even theme parks lacking visitors, emphasizing exactly that which is not present in any of these photographs – human beings. Chang's precise and candid documentation of these constructed "Asian" venues allow the viewer to transition from the literal to the symbolic. In describing this series, Chang says, "I was interested in the spectacle of the East that's produced for Western tourists."

Amy Franceschini

Amy Franceschini's childhood was spent between her father's vast farming operation in the San Joaquin Valley and her mother's organic farm on the coast. With this unique perspective on two very different approaches to growing food, in 1995 Amy co-founded the online magazines Atlas and Futurefarmers, a design studio/artist collaborative specializing in creating platforms to spark environmental dialogue.

Victory Garden 2007+ is a recent Futurefarmers project that derives its name from the nation-wide victory garden program of WW1 and WWII. This project was initially presented as a small pilot designed to evolve into a larger plan for a city supported food system with the goal to create a community of food producers through outreach and education. Inspired by the original program, between October 2006 and April 2007, Franceschini and a team of collaborators planted three Victory Gardens around the city of San Francisco. During 2008, at least 15 urban organic food gardens will be established in the Bay Area through her grass-roots efforts.

Franceschini says of the project, "I worked idealistically with the hope that a practical program would form; one that could be implemented, practiced and maintained – and it has. This project is both artwork and democracy in action. It is another reminder that grassroots efforts engage and mobilize communities and tune government to create change."

Seed Library represents the model for the Victory Garden "starter kit." It includes soil, fertilizers, a drip irrigation system and raised bed materials. Upon delivery, the starter kit also includes a lesson on how to build a raised bed, planting instructions, and an irrigation and seed-saving lesson.

Paul Kos

Paul Kos has been a leading artist and influential teacher in the Bay Area for more than three decades. Upon receiving his MFA from the San Francisco Art Institute (SFAI), Kos became a major figure in the San Francisco Conceptual Art scene of the 60s and 70s, and was among the first artists to incorporate video, sound and interactivity into his sculptural installations.

Kos' work often flips everyday subjects upside-down, causing the viewer to re-evaluate or re-think the subject. For the works in this show, Kos has created a unique hybrid work by combining painting and video. In projecting moving video footage onto a brush-stroked canvas, Kos plays with the preconceived ideas (or prejudic-

es) of both painting and video. Standing alone, the painted canvas resembles a typical hotel-lobby painting and the video is characteristic of meandering family vacation footage. Shown together, both works transform and comment on each other to make a captivating textured landscape.

George Kuchar

In the 1950s, George Kuchar and his twin brother Mike began producing super-low-budget take offs of Hollywood films with names like "I Was a Teenage Rumpot" and "Pussy on a Hot Tin Roof."

The brothers grew up in the Bronx and spent countless hours in the local movie theaters almost everyday after school. For their 12th birthdays, they were given an 8mm DeJur movie camera and immediately began to make their own movies, staging scenes in and around their apartment with costumes made from their mother's wardrobe (much to her chagrin).

The twins arrived in San Francisco in the late '60s and continued to make their own special brand of zany movies without any money, starring their friends and with no commercial potential. Writing about his initial impressions of San Francisco, Kuchar wrote in a recent memoir, "I fell victim (happily) to this quagmire of heaving and humping viscosity and embarked on an orgy of flesh-debasing delinquency that knew no bounds." This description best describes the spirit of his movies. In them he recalls his relationship with filmmaker Curt McDowell, who died of AIDS in 1987; his late dog Bocko and departed cat Blackie; his long-standing teaching gig at the San Francisco Art Institute, where he made videos with his students for \$1,000; and his fascination with earthquakes, hurricanes and electrical storms. In his more than 50 year career, George, along with his brother Mike, has made more than 200 movies.

Josh Lazcano

Josh Lazcano is a mixed media artist whose work combines an edgy street sensibility with self-irony. The large-scale photograph entitled Kevin Ancell was taken at a park in Tokyo in 2007. As Lazcano photographed groups of people in the park, he came upon a sleeping sunbather. It is a compelling image of an overly tanned man, spread out on a blanket with numerous belongings strewn around him. The image is mysteriously timeless and Lazcano has enhanced that mystery by using black and white photography and consciously eliminating any details from his composition that might provide clues to the time period. Adding to the ambiguity, Lazcano's title references California artist and surfer Kevin Ancell, although the photograph has nothing to do with Kevin Ancell.

Mads Lynnerup

Mads Lynnerup refers to his artwork as “social sculpture,” a phrase coined by the avant-garde German artist Joseph Beuys, who, in the second half of the 20th century, promoted the notion that ideas are superior to objects. In speaking about his practice, Lynnerup states, “I’m convinced it’s important to keep challenging the definition of art making since this could possibly be what makes our time significant.”

Many of Lynnerup’s performance-based videos are inspired by comical situations that he has encountered in his everyday life. *Car* is the first in a series of videos reenacting various scenarios where Lynnerup has observed objects that appeared to be inexplicably moving on their own. The 1 ½ minute video depicts a car cruising along the streets of West Oakland, seemingly without a driver. The motivation for *Car* came from Lynnerup seeing cars traveling through his neighborhood without drivers. He eventually learned that this driving style was started by African Americans who were tired of being pulled over by the police due to racial profiling. As a result, drivers started hiding their heads while on the road, and this mode soon became a common way of driving in West Oakland.

Drawing Cars (looking for a new vehicle for my work) is a series of black Sharpie marker drawings of various cars – from racecars and trucks to electric cars and buggies. As the playful title suggests, the drawings present another medium or “vehicle” for Lynnerup’s art.

Lourdes Portillo

Writer, director, and producer Lourdes Portillo has been making films for more than 30 years that have focused primarily on the search for Latino identity. She sees her mission as “challenging the hopes and dreams of a people.” Her works, which are often inspired by a political commitment, range from television documentary to satirical video-film collage.

Portillo has collaborated extensively with noted director Susana Muñoz and Nina Serrano and with Academy Award-winning editor Vivien Hillgrove. Portillo has received numerous awards and grants including a Guggenheim Fellowship in recognition of her contributions to filmmaking. Portillo’s films have received high praise at more than ten international women’s film festivals and her 1993 film “Columbus on the Trail,” was selected for the Whitney Museum’s Biennial exhibition that year. Her work is widely shown in classrooms and academic circles and integrated into curriculum studies.

Rigo 23

Perhaps best known for his large-scale murals that are typically painted in the shape of an arrow on the side of urban buildings, Portuguese-born muralist Rigo 23 works in a wide range of media including painting, drawing, embroidery, and video. His most recent body of work includes eight large unstretched canvases portraying activist events from 1985 – 1994 that have influenced and shaped Bay Area, national, and global politics. Rigo 23 has chosen specific incidents that have been largely forgotten by Bay Area residents.

One event that received national coverage, took place on January 16, 1991, when the US launched “Operation Desert Storm.” Those US citizens most angered by the prospect of war took to the streets. One of the biggest protests was in San Francisco where thousands of protesters gathered on the Bay Bridge, between San Francisco and Oakland, resulting in two days of massive gridlock.

The series was motivated by the artist’s need to remind us of these seminal moments in our recent history and to recognize how these events personally shaped and influenced his own life.

Clare Rojas

Clare Rojas is an accomplished painter, musician and filmmaker who seamlessly navigates between the three media. Her paintings are often an off shoot of her song lyrics and her films serve to document and clarify her narratives. While formally trained in painting and printmaking, Rojas chooses to work in a faux-naïve style that references folk art, comic books, Pennsylvania Dutch sign paintings, and printmaking.

Rojas’ paintings subtly and not-so-subtly poke fun at gender roles and representations of women in contemporary culture. In her current installation, she has reversed stereotypical gender roles by portraying a naked male as the object of laughing women and unnerved men. The depiction is clearly a spoof on the ridiculous poses in which women are so often perceived in contemporary media. While Rojas tempers her frustration with her own comedic sensibility, the ultimate message is deeply critical.

Philip Ross

Artist, amateur bio-engineer and member of the San Francisco Mycological Society, Philip Ross uses living organisms as the subject matter and the medium of his work. As he describes it, his work lies at the intersection of “homegrown technologies, folk art, materials science and Do-It-Yourself cultivation techniques.”

According to Ross, "Many of the artworks that I make are created through the design and construction of controlled environmental spaces. In these environments I nurture, transform, and refine a variety of sculptural artifacts much as one might train the growth of a Bonsai tree. My desire is that a person encountering this artwork will consider the idea of nature within a frame of social and historic contexts.

Ross's most recent sculpture was inspired by an eight-foot wide cross section of a Sequoia sempervirens he saw on display at the Museum of Natural History in New York City. The polished surface was incised with important dates in human history at corresponding growth rings. Ross found it both awesome and troubling to stand in front of this thousand-year-old tree: "awesome to see epic time in a physical manifestation, troubling to think about the need for this type of graffiti in the first place." His desire in making Double Chronic Now Power is to suggest a view of time that is more complex than a progressive chronology.

Chris Sollars

Chris Sollars is a San Francisco-based installation artist who is also the director and curator of 667 Shotwell, a non-commercial project space for artists to do experimental work that Sollars has maintained in his home since 2001, during the epidemic of disappearing art spaces in San Francisco.

C RED BLUE J is an experimental documentary feature film, directed by Sollars and featuring his family – including his sister Jennifer who works for the Bush administration, his father Fred who is a born-again Christian, and his lesbian mother Karen – to illustrate the divisiveness of the 2004 presidential election. C RED BLUE J is pieced together through an archive of family Super 8 films, photos, interviews, and art videos. The story personalizes the political division of the 2004 presidential campaign as the gay marriage initiative is tactically used to split the nation's vote and Sollars' family. Sollars' film puts a face to the opposition and reconstructs the lack of communication within a family and the nation.

C RED BLUE J will screen at 6 pm every Thursday evening during Eureka!. August 7, 14, 21 and 28. September 4, 11 and 18.

Hours

Tues - Wed, Fri 10 - 5
Thurs 10 - 8
Sat 12 - 5

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