



Santa Fe Art Institute

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COUNTERFEITING EDUCATION: DEMOCRACY IN PRACTICE

The FUNDRED PROJECT

A Nationwide Public Arts Project in Support of New Orleans and The Practice of Democracy

Conceptualized and Directed by Contemporary Artist Mel Chin Brought to Santa Fe by the Santa Fe Art Institute

Need Money? Make it yourself. Or better yet, get 3 million young people to make it for you. Some people might call it counterfeiting. We call it art.

In a country currently engaged in a very expensive war, there is little money set aside to ensure the health of our young people, (or for the victims of natural disasters). In post Katrina New Orleans the young people are specifically vulnerable to very high levels of toxic materials in the soil and water.

Conceptual artist Mel Chin has developed the FUNDRED Project to engage young people in the practice of democracy, raise awareness about environmental toxicity, and hopefully raise money for bioremediation efforts. With a team of scientists, Mel Chin has developed a way to isolate the lead in the soil making it harmless to humans when ingested. To remediate just the most heavily polluted areas (in terms of lead levels) of New Orleans will cost 300 million dollars.

After learning about the social and economic context of this environmental situation, students around the nation will design their very own \$100 bill. When 3 million young people have made their own \$100 bills, the artist will drive around the country in an armored truck, picking up the "money" The drawings will be delivered to the door of Congress in Washington D.C. and Congress will be asked to exchange the drawings from the children for real money for the cleanup project in New Orleans.

(more)

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Through participating in the project, Santa Fe Public Schools students are learning about environmental toxicity and the potential role of the arts in community development. In the process, they begin to understand what is at the heart of a democratic society – when individuals come together for a common cause they can make change. We believe that the best kind of change is one which makes the world healthier and safer for the generations to come.

In August 2007, Mel Chin was in Santa Fe as a visiting artist in our 2007 series of artists lectures and workshops “COMFORT ZONE: Artist as Activist.” During that visit he launched the Santa Fe branch of the FUNDRED Project. Since then, we have been talking and meeting with teachers in the public schools about how best to incorporate the project into their curricula. We have just begun to fully realize this project in the schools, and welcome participation from any teachers in the public and private schools who want to work with us to bring this project into their classrooms.

At SFAI we believe that art education is not just learning how to mix colors, but is about empowering young people to use their voices and participate in the important social and cultural conversations that should be taking place daily in our society. The FUNDRED Project is an example of the many projects we have happening in the Santa Fe Public Schools at any given time, empowering young people through the arts to be the strong, creative leaders we need them to be.

For more information please contact Education and Outreach Coordinator Johanna Kohout at (505) 424-5050 or jkohout@sfai.org.

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