



For Immediate Release

May 3, 2010

The Santa Fe Art Institute Presents

Elemental: Earth Air Fire Water ***Art and Environment*** An Exhibition

What: *Elemental: Earth Air Fire Water* Exhibition Opening Reception

Where: Santa Fe Art Institute

When: June 4 @ 5-7pm

How Much: free

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Where: Santa Fe Art Institute

When: June 4 – August 27, 9am-5pm M-F

How Much: free

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This year, as part of the 2010 Visiting Artist Lecture Series, ***Elemental: Earth Air Fire Water – Art and Environment***, the Santa Fe Art Institute has invited artists who focus on environmental awareness, presenting art as a vehicle for individuals, communities and leaders to address environmental concerns. The SFAI's goal is to reveal the variety of approaches and range of innovations that artists are currently using in conjunction with their creative, scientific and community collaborators. The SFAI hopes that by sharing artists' sensitivity to the plight of the planet – in works of art ranging from ancient and indigenous objects to contemporary forms and multimedia visions – we can promote a deeper understanding and connection to our natural world. We will focus on artworks created by artists concerned with the state of our environment both locally and globally. Environmental artists can work in various ways:

- Artists interpret nature, creating artworks to inform us about nature and its processes, or about environmental problems we face.
- Artists interact with environmental forces, creating artworks affected or powered by wind, water, lightning, even earthquakes.
- Artists re-envision our relationship to nature, proposing through their work new ways for us to co-exist with our environment.
- Artists reclaim and remediate damaged environments, restoring nature in artistic and often aesthetic ways.

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SFAI funding provided in part by The Burnett Foundation, The McCune Charitable Foundation, The Lannan Foundation, The Warhol Foundation, The Joan Mitchell Foundation, The Brindle Foundation, the City of Santa Fe Arts Commission and the 1% Lodgers' Tax and by New Mexico Arts, a Division of the Department of Cultural Affairs.

The exhibition, ***Elemental: Earth Air Fire Water - Art and Environment*** will feature work by many of the artists who have or will be lecturing this season. They include:

Futurefarmers/Amy Franceschini

Futurefarmers is a group of artists and designers working together since 1995. Their design studio serves as a platform to support art projects, an artist in residency program and various research interests. They are self-described teachers, researchers, designers, gardeners, scientists, engineers, illustrators, people who know how to sew, cooks and bus drivers with a common interest in creating work that challenges current social, political and economic systems.

Amy Franceschini calls herself a pollinator who creates formats for exchange and production that question and challenge the social, cultural and environmental systems that surround her. She received her BFA from San Francisco State University and her MFA from Stanford University. Amy is a professor of Art + Architecture at the University of San Francisco and a visiting artist at California College of the Arts Fine Arts Graduate program.

Patricia Johanson

With the solid belief that art can help heal the earth, multi-disciplinary environmental artist, Patricia Johanson has been initiating large-scale projects utilizing city planners, engineers, scientists and citizens' groups to create artworks that blend the radical and practical. She designs sewers, parks, and other elements of modern urban infrastructure to marry the needs of the local flora and fauna to the people living in the area. Johanson's work reclaims nature, using its structures as a model for thinking and functioning in unison with the environment.

Jennifer Levonian

Jennifer Levonian is a Philadelphia-based artist who creates cut-paper and watercolor animations that explore the ambivalence of everyday life by focusing on things which go unnoticed and transforming them into bizarre and uncanny events. Levonian graduated from the Rhode Island School of Design (RISD) with her master's in fine arts in painting. She had been creating watercolor paintings that were narrative, but felt something was missing. Her last winter at RISD, she took a class in animation which inspired her to turn her watercolors into animation. She cut up her paintings and made stop-motion films to give her narrative a context, a pace and more depth.

Jennifer Monson

Jennifer Monson has been pursuing an original approach to experimental dance forms in NYC since 1983 when she graduated from Sarah Lawrence College. In that time she has created a wide body of work that incorporates well-developed collaborative relationships with many artists. Her current artistic concerns have

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brought her back to the urban environment and in 2004 she founded iLAND- Interdisciplinary Laboratory for Art Nature and Dance. iLAND investigates the power of dance, in collaboration with other fields, to illuminate our kinetic understanding of the world. iLAND, a dance research organization with a fundamental commitment to environmental sustainability as it relates to art and the urban context, cultivates cross-disciplinary research among artists, environmentalists, scientists, urban designers and other fields.

Trevor Paglen

Trevor Paglen is an artist, writer, and experimental geographer whose work deliberately blurs lines between social science, contemporary art, journalism, and other disciplines to construct unfamiliar, yet meticulously researched ways to see and interpret the world around us. He holds a Master of Fine Arts degree from the School of the Art Institute of Chicago and a PhD in geography from the University of California at Berkeley, where he currently works as a researcher. Paglen is the author of three books and his photography and other visual works have been shown at numerous museums and galleries around the country.

Victoria Sambunaris

Sambunaris photographs the American landscape with a neutrality that allows for both natural and manmade structures to be seen equally, focusing on roads, houses, freight cars and the like, poking out of the landscape as if natural occurrences. These elements are sculptural, either representing the ever changing environment, land formations, and weather or the inventions and movement of humans into the dwindling wild landscape. Her photos simultaneously show the vast expanse of the land and the increasing encroachment of progress. She captures the beauty and tragedy of such encroachment, but also the technology required by today's living standards as a part of our contemporary landscape.

Gregory Sholette

Janet Koenig and Gregory Sholette frequently combine their graphic design and sculptural skills to produce extensively researched collaborative projects typically focusing on issues of class, history, and social justice. Their projects include subway posters for Group Material, an installation for the Brooklyn Army Terminal, and REPOhistory, a public art and activist collective whose mission focused on site-specific street signs "repossessing" lost or forgotten histories of New York City. Their work was recently included in Moving Targets an exhibition of posters on the Berlin-Poznan Deutsche Bahn rail line in Germany.

Mierle Ukeles

Public artist, Mierle Ukeles' work reminds us that when we need our spaces cleared of snow, garbage, or other inconveniences, we don't will it all to be gone - other people take care of it for us. Ukeles re-conceptualizes this first world perk into an active learning process that brings discussions of politics, environment, and society to the forefront. Through her work, she creates a springboard for

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rethinking urban ecology and the consequences of our current actions, both toward the environment and society.

Will Wilson

Will Wilson was born in San Francisco and moved permanently to the Navajo Reservation at the age of 10. He attended the Bureau of Indian Affairs Tuba City Boarding School from 1978 to 1983. He holds a bachelor's degree in art history and studio art and a master's of fine art in photography. Wilson has worked in a variety of media and has produced large-scale multi-media installations that incorporate photography and sculpture, monumental art pieces and intimate photo essays. Most recently Wilson's work provides a glimpse into the complex contemporary negotiation with a land we have become alienated from, our disease in understanding who we are, and possible paths for healing.

The Yes Men

With self-proclaimed expertise, these social and political satirists don the identities of spokespersons for prominent organizations in an effort to expose the dehumanizing effects of these corporations' policies. As the Yes Men are interviewed in the guise of these spokespeople (at conferences and symposia, on the internet and television) they respond with often outrageous ideas. For example, while posing as ExxonMobil representatives, they commented on the "worst case scenario" of transforming billions of people who die into oil to keep the oil industry running. The Yes Men practice "identity correction," with the goal of bringing publicity to the global issues affecting us today.

For more information, images, or interview requests, please contact Michelle Laflamme-Childs at mchids@sfai.org or call (505) 424-5050.

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