



KIM ABELES
Social Furniture
(1976-2023)

This book accompanies the exhibition,
Kim Abeles: Social Furniture (1976-2023)
Ronald H. Silverman Fine Arts Gallery,
September 14 - October 28, 2023, CSU Los Angeles

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cover:
frugalworld, 2023
Sculptural table constructed
as a Venn diagram from three
tabletops, handcrafted objects
including selections from
Mike Knox's collection created
by inmates, Artifacts of
Solitary Confinement
77" x 77" x 33"
Photo: Ken Marchionno

Wrap:
***Found Voices (Dedicated to
People with AIDS), 1989***
Sculptural components by Kim
Abeles, interviews by Kim Abeles
and Peter Bergmann, sound design
and editing by Barbara McBane.
Table and chairs made of wood,
soil, felt, and satin, suspended
chiffon chair, objects belonging
to PWAs, small photographs
of objects with handwritten
alphabets found globally
7' diameter table
Photo: Patrick Newcombe

Right, see page 49:
***Eau de Lourdes
From The Image of
St. Bernadette, 1987***



RONALD H. SILVERMAN
**Fine
Arts
Gallery**
at California State University, Los Angeles

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As Rock As Tree, 2015/2018
Pigment print
23" x 33"





Greed Turns to Glue, 1985
Assembled photographs of artist's body and the head of Khalil Eskander Shahin (aka Kando), horses made of glue, carved branches, wood with measuring delineations, soil, enamels on bicycle wheel, copper bucket lined with photographs of Dead Sea Scroll fragments
82" by 24" by 24"
Collection of Jeanne Meyers
Photo: Daniel J. Martinez

Foreword

The exhibition, *Kim Abeles: Social Furniture (1976-2023)*, features her sculpture, large-scale installations, and mixed media artworks created between 1976-2023. These works are engaged with the environment, historical narratives, feminism, geography, and social sciences. Her images are reflections of life in the 20th and 21st centuries, and they are made with smog, landscapes discovered through geographic systems, collected objects and portraiture across cultural zones.

The exhibition comprises six unique but interwoven sections with over sixty artworks: *Human Nature, Documents, Body of Voices, Atmosphere, frugalworld, and Space + Time*. Abeles said, "The tables and chairs I've built through the years serve as forms to house concepts. As a functional construct, the individual takes their seat at the table. In metaphor, these are formats to express a portrait, relay a process, or consider our reverence for objects. The chair is a persona, and the table implies community. I want viewers to experience through the process, and the resulting artworks about the individual connection with the world that touches them".

Abeles has worked on community-based projects for over three decades, and the exhibition includes *Pearls of Wisdom - End the Violence*. The latter was created in collaboration with the organization *A Window Between Worlds* to address

domestic violence. Her work, *The Importance of Objects (The Natural History Museum Collection)*, features elements of the museum. In *Resilience: A Living Room*, Abeles conveys her artist-in-residence experience at the Institute of Forest Genetics, funded through the El Dorado Arts Council and National Endowment for the Arts. Her "Social Practice" involves individuals, which is evident in *Equidistant Inland Empire*, made possible with photographs by people in the region.

Abeles' work may be divided into two distinct spheres. One is on nature, and she treats it as a mystical experience beyond words but within the sphere of artistic valuation. The other is the world of humans, which embodies the random but purposeful and subjective constructs that are formed by individual ontologies in their social spaces. Carefully curated and installed with the support of the hard-working gallery student staff, this exhibition genuinely shares Kim's complex and compelling art world.

The comprehensive book *Kim Abeles: Social Furniture (1976-2023)* includes essays by Peter Frank and Shana Nys Dambrot; poems by Beverly Lafontaine, Sheshu Foster, and Taylor Graham; and the book is designed by James Scott and printed by Typecraft, Inc.

Dr. Mika M. Cho

Director, Ronald H. Silverman Fine Arts Gallery
Professor of Art, Art Department
California State University, Los Angeles

Kim Abeles: Object Lessons

By Peter Frank



Photo: Ken Marchionno

Once it grew away from its Minimalist roots, Conceptual Art began allowing itself a more encompassing, more elaborate, and (ironically enough) more materialistic discourse. The art of ideas went from the hermetic to the baroque, the poetic elision to the narrative, even theatrical. The “second generation” of conceptualists, emerging in the mid-70s, found that ideas were not just self-sustaining phenomena or traces of intellection, but building blocks of a new – and for many, newly engaged – discourse of and on perception and reflection.

Kim Abeles, very much a second-wave conceptualist, has demonstrated the intricacies of multi-layered response to the world and to its species, not least her own. Self-realized as a mature artist and thinker for a good half century, as this survey evinces, Abeles has long maintained a stylistically eclectic but consistently dialogic, even pedagogic, voice, committing considerable fabrication skills to the construction of densely conceived and aesthetically alluring objects whose elegance, and eloquence, speak to issues both central to the making of art and the sustaining of life.

To describe Abeles’ art, or artistic sensibility, as “charming” or “playful” is to lose her forest for your trees. While she measures and treasures the intimate and the delicate, she equally embraces the expansive, you might say pan-tropospheric, connecting different things gathered across the globe as much as in a backyard. Abeles does not readily venture off the face of the earth, but she makes us feel the cosmic stirring in the world’s “several things.” Abeles sees the universe in a grain of sand, but she builds her (and our) sense of awe around the sand itself in a kind of micro-astronomy.

Several of Abeles’ most ambitious projects have involved the organization of various objects – and various kinds of objects – into exquisitely ordered displays, effectively inhering the ordering and classifying impulses of modern human science into post-modern human art. Thus, Abeles’ own art demonstrates the ties that bind scientific and artistic inquiry and the general human impulse to inquire in the first place. Her work has long contemplated the cultural phenomenon of the museum, notably its evolution from ecclesiastical elucidation to royal Wunderkammer to academic repository to contemporary locus for artworks – and other things -- imbued with their own aura. The “other things” can include remnants of natural history, relics of social and political history, traces of fancy that propose a history invented or subverted, and so forth.

This tendency to gather souvenirs and indicators, talismans and curios, into presentations that at once generate and transcend categories of comprehension – ways of both classifying and of confounding classification – betrays Abeles’ standing as a second-generation, “narrative” conceptualist, uninterested in the phenomenological quiddity of things but entranced by their dynamic existence in a webbed (and perhaps warped) multiplanar field of post-rational observation. Abeles does not reject orthodoxy – the orthodoxy of the original conceptualists, for instance – so much as she simply does not heed convention.

By now, of course, the effulgent, romantic post-conceptualism she and her contemporaries practice has generated its own conventions; but Abeles, for one, has not been encumbered by intellectual habit or rote gesture. She clearly trusts her instincts, whether for natural form or for human design, and collects and collates and creates examples with a precocious fervor. This does not constitute a “world of Kim Abeles” distinct from anyone else’s “world” – on the contrary – but it does comprise a method. What Abeles proposes is that, no matter the broader implications that emerge when set in interpretive context, there is so much at least potential resonance in a natural formation or human device that its interpretation is a matter of personal confabulation, and what Abeles’ art does is exemplify that confabulatory process.

Kim Abeles has long been regarded as ecologically engaged, and – given her preoccupation with both natural world and human realm – she has earned her environmentalist bona fides with the prescience manifest particularly in several earlier works. She also enjoys standing as a feminist, but in this regard Abeles has been involved with feminist discourse less through direct thematic militancy than through general humanist philosophy. In a sense, her interpretation of nature-as-nurture – as a (the?) source of global vitality – adopts the Gaian construction of earthhood to the purpose of inspiring individual and universal imagination. No matter what political viewpoint might frame all, some, or any of her work, however, what Abeles wants us most to grasp is that we are responsible for our world, and that we never dream alone.

Los Angeles
August 2023

Kim Abeles: An Archive of the World

My library is an archive of longings. —Susan Sontag

“Why am I so obsessed with symbols?,” Kim Abeles asks herself. “This is what life is, human life—I care for people,” she answers. And her particular form of care manifests in an omnivorous curiosity—about the textures and characteristics of ordinary existence, artifacts of personal and historical events, social and ecological systems of destruction and preservation, evidence of entropy and creation, environmentalism and its feminist intersections, emotional instinct and rigorous research, mysticism and dialectic, fact and meaning. It also manifests as photography, drawing, printmaking, sculpture, assemblage, video, installation, performance, writing, bookmaking, and the construction of speciality cabinets and especially tables—sculptures with furniture motifs whose bodily materials and displayed contents manifest evocative as well as expository archives.

Social Furniture is a career overview that features selected sculptures, large-scale installations, and mixed media artworks created between 1976-2023; but it also includes recent work, historical artifacts, and new versions of / updates to certain early pieces—which affords Abeles not only the opportunity for material restoration as needed, but also the chance to reconsider the works’ intentions within today’s cultural atmospheres. In this way she not only retells and reframes her career’s focus, but also engages it on a new level within the momentum of history, a dedication to activism despite the glacial pace of change, and what it means to have been “ahead of one’s time” now that the time has finally arrived. “History is not a straight line,” says Abeles. “The struggles are all still ongoing. Have patience, there’s no need to be discouraged.”

The exhibition comprises six unique but interwoven sections with more than 60 individual artworks, organized into thematic sections titled *Human Nature*, *Documents*, *Body of Voices*, *Atmosphere*, *frugalworld*, and *Space + Time*. But in a very real way, one might think of the exhibition as though it were a single house, or better yet a library, whose furnished rooms are each anchored by an important table and arrayed with germane interdisciplinary mixed media works exploring their spheres of thought in thorough, multidimensional, materially far-ranging special collections.

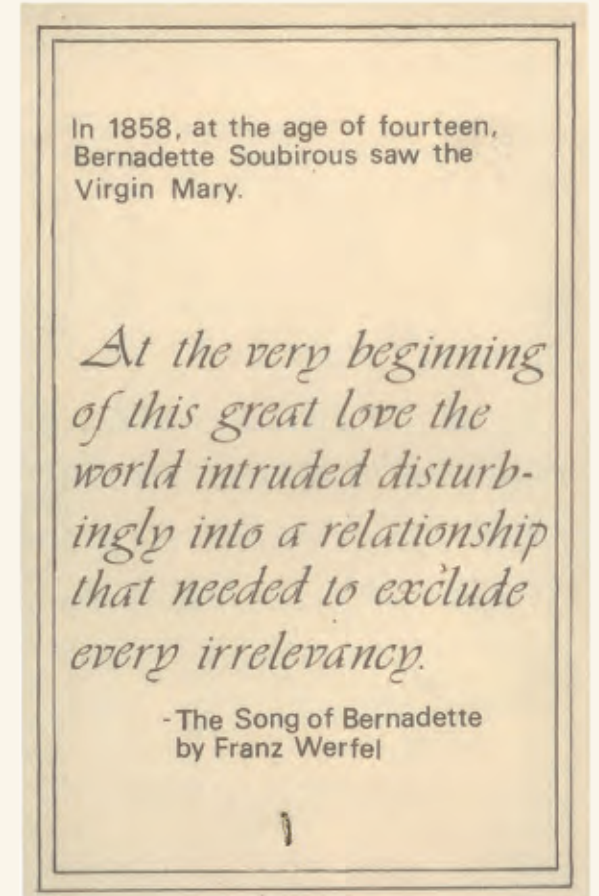
This organizational style—structurally and experientially evocative of an archive in its very format—also expresses profound insight into what interests Abeles as an artist, how her mind processes inspiration, and by what means she gives form to her topics. For example, *Human*

Nature’s key “The Importance of Objects” table’s meta-narrative questioning the authoritative voice and claims of authenticity in museological archives, especially as pertains to the concepts of plundering and replication. The section also includes a unique and slightly surreal look at the interactions and overlapping symbolism of air pollution, public transportation, lichens, and childhood; and several poignant works based on trees, waterfalls, birds, and the dangers mankind poses to their environments—all of which generates an affecting ecosystem of concerns around the interaction of humanity and the natural world.

Documents proceeds in much the same way, with the table “Documents K-12” taking on the Brown v Board of Education legal case through the prism of collected stories—now viewed in the unanticipated context of the gutting of Affirmative Action—and setting it within other kinds of personal archives. Her own self-portraits from this section take the form of chronicles—her battle with mountains of paperwork, years of identification cards and parking tickets—and resonate with the nearby series based on the Dead Sea Scrolls, or rather, the laborious process of their discovery and decoding as opposed to their contents, in a process which has been reanimated by more recent technological advances in image-capture and even AI.

Across *Body of Voices* whose “Pearls of Wisdom/End the Violence” table holds together intimate artifacts commemorating and attempting healing from domestic violence, along with a table dedicated to people who died from the AIDS virus—with all the tragic resonance to the covid pandemic—Abeles spotlights the power of somatic memory, survival from trauma, and whence comes the strength to endure death and other kinds of loss. “To Sit as a Ladder” references Rosa Parks; “Walk a Mile in My Shoes” explicitly quantifies and honors the labor of activism; the Saint Bernadette series recalls the French nun’s status as the patron saint of illness and poverty.

The *frugalworld* section archives many, often heartbreakingly lovely objects that incarcerated men and women made while in solitary confinement; vintage books with folksy household hacks; that time Abeles made a bunch of privileged private school kids go dumpster diving; and a hope chest made of trash—all of which speaks to the prized skills of patience and invention, the balm of creativity, and the ability to see the value in even the lowliest materials, a metaphor for each other and a way to care for the planet at once. In *Space + Time* a cartographic table uses geology



Souvenir from *The Image of St. Bernadette*, 1987
Edition of 900 holy cards created with xerox, gold silkscreen, and locks of hair
4.5" x 3"

to transcend geography and forge connections between strangers, observe celestial patterns, and make the world of ideas and its furniture into concrete (literally) findings.

In some ways, Abeles’ smog-based works, probably her best-known, are both her darkest and her funniest. *Atmosphere* centers around the “40 Days and 40 Nights (of Smog)” table; includes a series of outgrown children’s furniture and other meaningful personal objects subjected to “20 days of smog, 10 days of acid rain,” or “40 days of smog” and so forth; and features an assortment of related works such as her acclaimed Presidential Smog Plates and the iconic “Dinner for Two in One Month of Smog” with its legs made of mufflers and chairs of ethereal sewn chiffon. You couldn’t sit at that table even if you wanted to—any more than you could eat off the plates she suspended

out her Downtown Los Angeles window to achieve the particulate pigment results. These works speak directly to her inherent interest in research and awareness-raising, as well as her insertion of personal memories into the formula as required, and highlight in the most satisfying way how her practice, despite being structured in a quasi-academic modality of archivism, inevitably returns to and relies upon the power of her own humanity to breathe life into her library of ideas.

— **Shana Nys Dambrot**
Los Angeles, 2023



Human Nature

*Early in our lives we collect objects, dead or alive,
as a way to possess and reaffirm our existence.*

2014

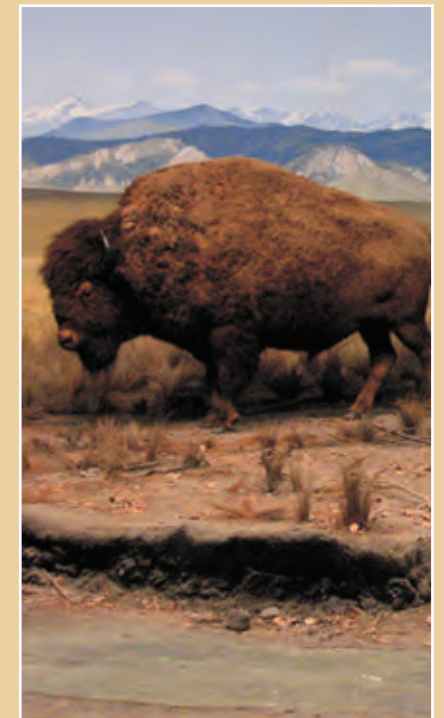
Contents of table:

- | | |
|---|--|
| Navajo textile (208 x 140 cm) | Complete disarticulated skeleton of a female White-throated Magpie Jay |
| Polycheate - Medusa Worm (in alcohol) | 2 Papago miniature baskets |
| Shame-faced Crab - Calappa flammea | 2 Acoma miniature pottery |
| Mountain Beaver - Aplodontia rufa (skull) | 2 Eskimo ivory carvings |
| Black-throated Magpie-Jay (stuffed) | 3 Zuni fetishes |
| | Nudibranch - Diaulula greeley |

The Importance of Objects (The Natural History Museum Collection), 2005

Mixed media table with embedded videos, specimens, and artifacts from the museum's collection, floorplan and display containers made with paper pulp sheets and charcoal, photographs of museum's exterior brick, and mammal skeleton, camera lens

36" x 96" x 52"
Courtesy Natural History Museum of Los Angeles County
Installation photos: Ken Marchionno



Selections of Abeles' photographs of dioramas at Natural History Museum that are placed on the legs of the table

The Importance of Objects for Fred Dewey

1.
He liked these museums, certainly because they were free, but also because they beckoned on the scale of Palacio de Bellas Artes in Mexico City and other columned and vaulted museums and spaces of his youth. Sundays he'd bring the family to Exposition Park, so in later years as adults his children associated Exposition Park with him, as if these spaces were his, the rose garden severely pruned or mulched or brilliant in hot sun, exhibits on science and industry didactic in his own manner, as if capable of his rages, even the toy train circling a dusty track through its miniature 1950s landscape somehow serious like him, deliberately repetitive, not without its own mysteries.

He joined his brother who was Mexican consul in Fresno, California in 1926 or so, age 19 or 20, married a Barbara Jane Dennis, a blonde he'd later mention to no one; they had a son (died 1968). He bought a Ford automobile from his brother and worked as photographer's assistant to Edward Weston in Carmel with Weston's sons. In Fresno 1939 he married Leonore Cecelia McKrystle Irish-American biologist and teacher. He followed Leonore to Woodfords Indian School outside Carson City, where she taught till 1937 - 40. He shot pictures of Washo students and Paiute families that Leonore self-published in her 1991 book, Rabbit Skin Blanket. He worked as a WPA and portrait photographer through the Depression in San Francisco on \$30 a month, but in World War 2 film and developing chemicals were rationed and the portrait business closed. He was a shipyard welder in World War 2, til the sight in his right eye was destroyed by a steel sliver. The marriage failed and Leonore took their two sons.

He returned to Mexico, traveling, taking pictures. Tehuanas of the Isthmus of Tehuantepec in elegant costumes. A party stepping ashore from a small boat, a ferry at the beach at Manzanillo, the wind in the coconut groves whipping the women's dresses against their bodies as they held on to their white hats. Crowd scenes, public markets and September 16th in Mexico City, people visible on every surface from skyscraper rooftops to the tops of tall statues and light fixtures. Indians dancing under a tent at a local fiesta and marimba players wearing fedoras. Boxes of curled negatives, sixty five and seventy years old--Paiutes in Nevada, studio portraits in San Francisco in the early 30s, the construction of the Golden Gate Bridge, train trips across Mexico. He said his family in Mexico City had thrown most of his photos and negatives away long ago. This is some of what I recalled, weighing in my hands the plastic bag of ashes in a little white box with his name on it.

He was in his sixties when I met him, the rage leaching from him like heat from a desert highway at night. After his kids left home, the woman from Jalisco that he married when she was 16 and he 41 left him too. But the L.A. Department of Public Housing could not figure out a way to evict him for the next fifteen years, he refused to vacate the apartment in the Ramona Gardens housing projects, though his family was gone. Instead, he appeared at their offices and argued that his rent was too high, that they had gypped him for years. At the breakfast table he circled welding and shipyard jobs in the want ads, insisting for years that he was could get another job in the shipyard. But he had stopped driving--he'd been a reckless driver, taking the turns at high speed, roaring through the streets half-blind; and at night I imagine he couldn't see a thing--and his old station wagon must have been towed away from Ramona Gardens when it was no longer moved. Still, he kept a pile of tires in his living room, a bumper leaning in the corner, beside the record players, speakers and radios that no longer worked. When we moved him to the senior citizen towers by MacArthur Park, we found closets and cabinets filled with boxes of newspapers, National Geographic, Look and Life magazines and Reader's Digest condensed books.

When we took him to art museums, he examined closely the art with his one eye and gave it a lot of thought. He had interesting things to say about it, whatever it might be. He told me he had been living on Cannery Row, near John Steinbeck and Ed Ricketts when Jimmy Cagney knocked

on his door, bottle of wine in hand, asking to borrow a corkscrew. When he was in his seventies, he enjoyed it when we took him to the beach. His body was still broad and strong into his eighties, weathered by the sun. He was losing his teeth, his nails yellowed and brittle looking and his feet gnarly as hoofs. Sometimes at the beach I'd wake up under my book in the late afternoon breeze to find that he'd swum out of sight, far beyond all the people enjoying the surf, beyond the breakers. We'd sit waiting till he started back to shore, watching to distinguish the shape of him swimming. In the last years, a lifeguard once called him back to shore.

2.
In this civilization your civilization may end up in a box.
In one of those boxes you might come across hushed feelings,
infinite desires distilled.
Numbers on the shelf, final specimens, last known location.
In this corner the shadows of terror, silent grief, lost lives.
In this drawer female genitalia draped across the saddlehorns
of the militia.

In this drawer the male genitalia, a scrotum tanned for a tobacco pouch.
Here's a diagram of three stars over Sand Creek, Deer Creek.
Schematics of recognition, skeletal rationales, partially recovered echoes.
On the sign it said
No Trespassing,
but on the other side it didn't say nothing.
In this glass case, deepsea giant green pickles \$1 each,
pickled pigs feet with bay leaves behind glass, a jar
of hard candy for a penny.
Don't touch, don't touch! Don't you know what don't
touch means?
The little boy Aldo skipped ahead to see the exhibit,
red lights flashing in his shoes.

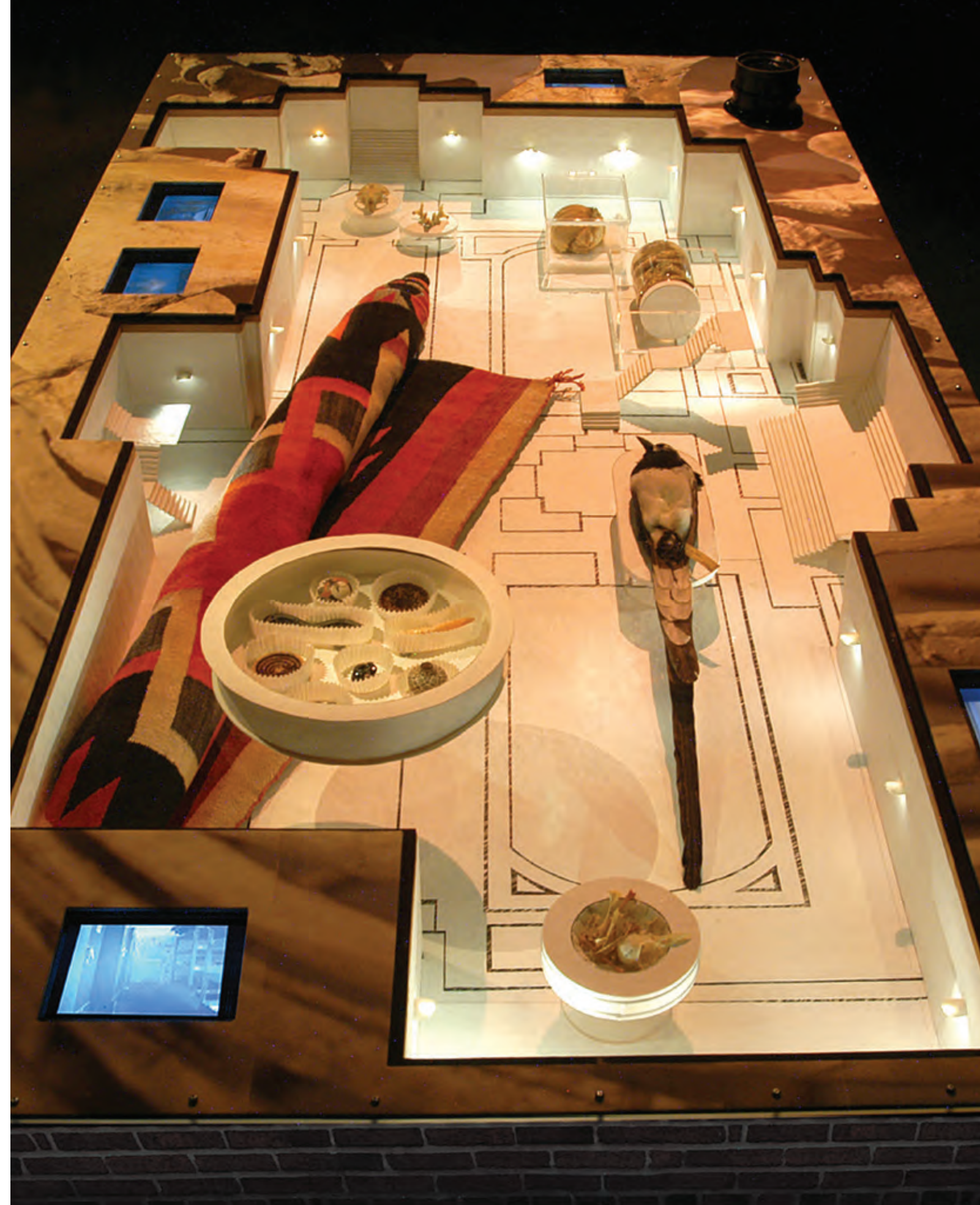
3.
With this deracinated mockingbird you should be able to swing
wide on the outside
With this fetish of rationality you should be able to chump change
With this tiny ocean you should be able to wrap your mind around time
With this flag furled you should be able to crank the Other
With this Zapotec gaze you should be able to toll desire like a bell
With this digital hangover you should finger one lip of a universe
With this animal strength you should be able to categorize summers
With this wino on the bench you should be able to tip big

4.
In any order that seems best, insert these items in spaces provided:
1. eyepiece
2. purple velvet
3. plywood
4. solid concrete
5. painted black
6. signage
7. formaldehyde
8. video octopus

T-Rex left a _____ message, replaced by a crustacean,
between the foot steps of school kids and the _____,
(Our Lady of Peace School, you _____ refugee),
(_____) who will save you now? Who can
you help yourself, _____ you metaphor?
On the other side of _____, all the way the other side
of _____, finally way beyond it _____.

Sesshu Foster

Written by Sesshu Foster and presented for a reading on the occasion of the exhibition, Conversations, organized by Dr. Vanda Vitali at the Natural History Museum of Los Angeles County. Each poet was paired with one of the artists and their work in the show. Sesshu Foster was paired with Kim Abeles and her sculptural table, The Importance of Objects (The Natural History Museum Collection).





The Importance of Objects, 2005
 Pigment print
 Edition of 20
 10.75" x 17"

For the contents of the table that was built from the physical presence of the museum's building, I asked each curator to select their favorite object from the collection they managed. Each curator, after all, is the knowledgeable caretaker for objects and specimen they have grown to love.

One item selected for *The Importance of Objects* by anthropologist Dr. W. Warner (Bill) Wood was a Navajo weaving. It appears in the table and serigraph. Dr. Wood's book, *Made in Mexico: Zapotec Weavers and the Global Ethnic Art Market (Tracking Globalization)*, discusses this weaving and others that are Navajo designs recreated by Zapotec weavers for various international companies. This textile, #235, is named after the page number in a catalogue about the Hearst collection of the original weavings. Abeles' print is an interpretation of the #235 journey.

The Importance of Objects was created for the exhibition, *Conversations*, at the Natural History Museum of Los Angeles County. The exhibition was produced by the Natural History Museum of Los Angeles County under the direction of Vanda Vitali, former Executive Producer and Vice President of Public Programming for the Natural History Museum. Patrick Ela was the Independent Curator for the exhibit. Museum scientists paired with contemporary LA artists took a fresh look at objects from the Museum's rich collections. The resulting conversations used the languages of art and science to make connections to the past, present, and future.



The Migration of Thought, 2005
 Serigraph
 Edition of 124
 24" x 36"
 Commissioned by the Natural History Museum of Los Angeles County,
 and produced by Self-Help Graphics
 Editions in private collections and the AltaMed Art Collection

Consider the image of thirty-three million objects in one place: specimens and artifacts taken care of and closely observed by scholars. Vaults and drawers and shelves meticulously house objects that at first might seem one and the same. In a world transforming into a gluttony of throwaway consumerism, here are specimens lovingly labeled, carefully handled, and investigated with a Sherlock eye. The migration of birds, like the migration of objects, describes a history logged in orderly drawers of specimens tagged with handwritten diaries.

The Importance of Objects implies a peek at the entire collection of the Natural History Museum, specimens in alcohol and objects made by hand, brought together again as they are in nature. The sculpture is a table shaped in the footprint of the Museum, displaying a selection from each collection, suggested by the curators of each. Inset

video monitors show five visual montages of the collection storage, labs and offices. Here is a narrative about maintaining the items, like books in a library or genealogy in a hall of records, each with a number, a category, an origin, and a visual language of life's objects.

Curators who participated with this project: Jim Dines, Curator of Mammalogy; Kirk Fitzhugh, Curator of Polychaetes; Margaret Hardin, Curator of Ethnology; Kimball Garrett, Curator of Ornithology; Jody Martin, Curator of Crustacean; Angel Valdes, Curator of Malacology; and, Bill Wood, Curator of Anthropology.

Contributing artists in the Conversations exhibit included Kim Abeles, Lita Albuquerque, Tony Berlant, Paul McCarthy, Ed Moses, and John Valadez, with sound design by Phyllis Ginter.



The videos embedded flush to the surface:

Under the Sea, 1929
 Courtesy of the Field Museum of Natural History, Chicago
 Filmed by J.E. Williamson and produced by the Field Museum

Song Birds as Neighbors, 1920-29
 Courtesy of the collection of the Prelinger Archives, San Francisco
 Filmed by William F. and Irene Finley for Bray Studios, Inc.

Selections of underwater videos of Florida species, 2009-14
 Videographer: Ariane Dimitris

Selections of underwater videos of nudibranchs, 2003-4
 Videographer: Angel A. Valdes, Ph.D.
 Courtesy Los Angeles County Natural History Museum

Red-eyed Vireo Portrait, 2010
 Videographer: Lang Elliott

Bees
 Videographer: Kim Abeles

Cabinet of Wondering, 2014

Photographs of collected objects, video monitors embedded flush to the wall with historical films and recent videos from naturalists, cases for specimens on loan from the Natural History Museum, University of Florida

10' x 8.5' x 2'
 Funded by the Harn Museum of Art and the Center for Cultural Innovation

Cabinet of Wondering was created for the Harn Museum of Art exhibition, *Technology & the Natural World*, curated by Kerry Oliver-Smith, former Curator of Contemporary Art for the Harn, and Sean Miller, Associate Professor at the University of Florida.

The specimens in the cases were loaned from the Florida Museum of Natural History

UFPH-Temp15 Screech owl taxidermy of adult
 7" x 5" x 6"

UFPH-Temp4 Red-eyed Vireo taxidermy of adult
 6.25"x5"x5"

UFPH-Temp5 Shark egg case real
 2.5" x 1.25" x 0.75"

UFPH-Temp7 White crowned pigeon taxidermy of adult
 23.75" x 3.5" x 6.75"

UFPH-Temp10 Blenny jarred specimens
 5.5" x 2.25" Diameter

Dia UFPH-Temp11 Pinfish jarred specimens
 7.25" x 3.75" Diameter

and from Abeles' collection

Articulated skeleton of a Cynopterus sphinx bat
 6.5" x 2" x 4"

Honey bees on tray
 .5" x .25"

Elysia crispate (lettuce sea slug) jarred specimen
 4" x 2.25" Diameter

Cabinet of Wondering

Early in our lives we collect objects, dead or alive, as a way to possess and reaffirm our existence. We collect souvenirs and lucky pencils, gazing at them from time to time in wonder. They and we merge into perfect moments. Collections present comfort at its best and passion at its purest, even when exploration may seem too scientific for such romantic expressions. Collection managers in natural history museums open one drawer of species after another, and then hold their favorite specimen in hand and carefully turn the tagged bird in all directions of the winds.

Our personal collections, whether in a small metal box or a house full of figurines, become a self-portrait. We try to connect with the "natural world" and all existence, seen and unseen, with knowledge and faith. We feel love for these symbols as we dust them, show them to others and explain them to ourselves. What does it mean to remove these things that are beyond our reach and with a need to hold them? I

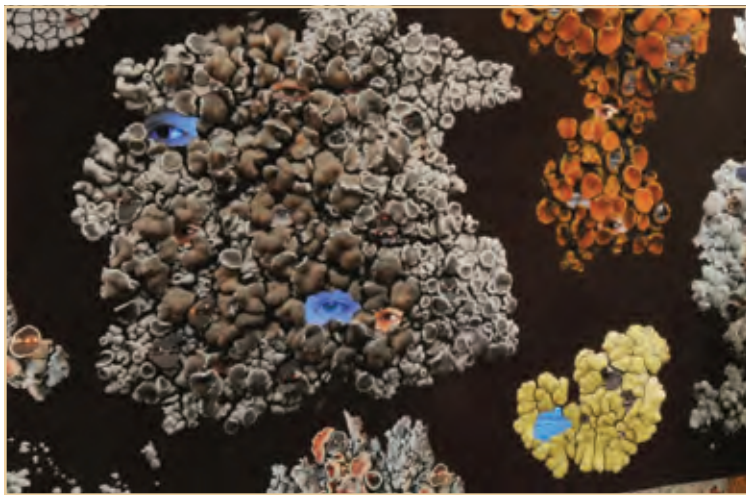
am wondering about the urge to separate them from their surroundings, and then longing to bring them back together on a shelf, in the box, in our imagination.

I've worked for many years with objects, believing in their deep meaning. Even when the viewer cannot articulate that meaning, it exists and speaks on a profound level. The objects you see in *Cabinet of Wondering* are from two sources. First, the specimens from the air and the sea are on loan from the collection of the Florida Museum of Natural History. And second, you see photographed specimens and objects that I have collected over the years, given to me by friends, or mysterious things I found or took. Let's put it this way: when I was in my teens, my mother showed me a box of her fabrics and pointed to a particular length and said that I was never, I mean never ever, to use it. So, one day when she was at work, I carefully opened the box and cut off a piece of the fabric, less than an inch around, the size of my finger print, not large enough to do much except hold it deep within my hand. And that is the wonder.

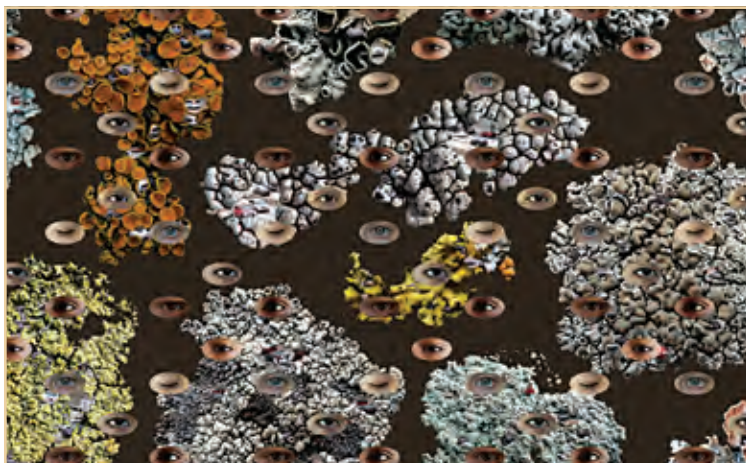




Waiting/Watching, 2012
Videos of eyes of youth and traffic in their neighborhoods, the video monitors are embedded flush to the mural with images of lichen that Abeles photographed in the same region 8' x 12' x 2'
Commissioned by EcoArts Connections and Museum of Natural History, University of Colorado, Boulder, CO
Photo: Casey Cass



Waiting/Watching, 2012
Detail of pigment print and embedded videos



Waiting/Watching, 2012 version
Created for Exhibit Envoy

The video wall *Waiting/Watching* was one of the artworks in Abeles' exhibit, *the interconnectedness of things*, commissioned by EcoArts Connections and Museum of Natural History, University of Colorado, Boulder, CO. Abeles worked in collaboration with atmospheric scientists, emissions specialists, lichenologists, transportation professionals, middle and high school students. Collaborating organizations included Air Care Colorado, Manhattan Middle School, and Spark: UCAR Science Education at the National Center for Atmospheric Research.

The video wall combines enlargements of lichens from Abeles' field photographs, along with stills and videos of local traffic and the searching eyes of school children. Lichens are used in the lab as biomonitors to measure air pollution, and the entire exhibition brought together a conversation about air pollution, reducing idling of cars, and promoting bus transportation.

A second version of *Waiting/Watching* was made for the exhibition, *Ignite! The Art of Sustainability*, curated by Kate Davies. The exhibit opened at the University of California Davis Design Museum, and began its tour of California (2012-15). This was a project of the Green Museums initiative of the California Association of Museums. From the exhibition text panel: "Lichens, like the veritable canary in a coal mine, are susceptible to air pollution and can signal for us the adverse affects of smog, so prevalent in the LA Basin and other urban areas. The mood set by this work suggests that our actions are being watched by the most vulnerable and ancient of life forms. What debt do we owe them?"

The lichen patiently watch us, in all our foibles and efforts.

Lichens, as biomonitors, indicate air quality as they absorb from their environment both the air and moisture. Because of this miracle, they are collected and studied in the lab to compare carbon, lead and other pollutants in specific locations. They can be found on rocks and trees for instance, and mostly we walk or drive past them, overlooking their spectacular structure, colors and longevity.

I first learned about lichens as biomonitors in a conversation with Pat Kocielek, Director of the University of Colorado Museum of Natural History through a project commissioned by EcoArts Connection in Boulder. He led me to a small yet powerful book by James N. Corbridge and William A. Weber, *A Rocky Mountain Lichen Primer*. Weber's personal and passionate interest in lichens showed me this: when one begins to look at lichen, one never sees the world the same again. It is the stalwart life of the lichens as well as their beauty that draws us forward to see everything in life related to their expression. Once you look at lichen really, really closely, you will see them in the patterns of all things natural. And they in turn must see us, with all our misdeeds, decisions, and choices.



Lichen Hunts were set into motion during an event at Manhattan Middle School in Boulder, Colorado, and through the *Self-Guided Lichen Hunt* pamphlet. The goal was to encourage people to ride the bus. The free pamphlet is downloadable at: <https://kimabeles.com/wp-content/uploads/2018/01/lichenHunt.pdf>



Mass Commute stickers are given away to celebrate people who use forms of transportation other than solo car driving.

Right:
The monograph, *Particulates*, focuses on the Smog Collector plates that middle school students created on the roof of their school. The goal was to encourage parents to stop idling their cars when they pick up their kids after school.



Particulates is part of a multi-faceted project, *the invisible connectedness of things*, created by visual artist Kim Abeles, commissioned by EcoArts Connections (EAC) and co-presented by the University of Colorado Museum of Natural History and EAC.



Breathing Trees, 2018
 Fabric created from photographs of tree specimen at the Institute of Forest Genetics
 16" diameter; height variable to reach from floor to ceiling
 Collection of El Pueblo Park Association, Los Angeles



Resilience - A Living Room

Abeles was artist-in-residence at the Institute of Forest Genetics (IFG), a national research facility located in the foothills of the Sierra Nevada during 2018 through a grant from the National Endowment for the Arts program facilitated by the El Dorado Arts Council.

The artist created a series of mixed media artworks entitled, *Resilience*, to visually interpret IFG's research of pine species that show resilience in difficult environmental scenarios. One of her interests had to do with the trees planted as early as 1926 by James Eddy and his crew. He collected 97 types of conifers from around the world and developed hybridization experiments (today, the institute works with DNA to identify the more resilient trees for re-planting). Eddy's plantings from the early 20th century unexpectedly enabled scientists of today to study climate change effects since the trees originated from differing elevations and regions.

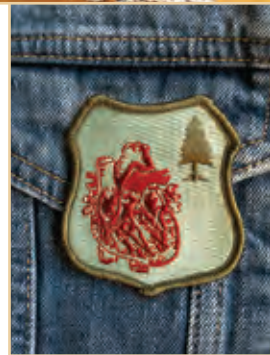
Breathing Trees portray a selection of the conifers and are labelled as they are in the IFG groves, with the name, date of the planting, and identification number. Abeles photographed the trees and compiled the images to create silk fabric. The trees "breathe" and respond to the slightest air currents as viewers approach. *Breathing Trees* express through art, the metaphor of the tree as a symbol of our aspirations and our bond with nature.



Photo: Michelle Head

Detail views of Resilience - A Living Room at the Confidence Lab, Placerville, CA, 2018

The installation includes portraits of foresters and mentors for the students' understanding of resilience, pigment print of the fireplace at IFG, *Lichen Puzzles*, photographic fabric of pine needles for upholstery, embroidered patches, and *Breathing Trees*.



Coulter Pine, 2018

Abeles received permission to collect a Coulter pine cone from one of the stands at IFG. These weigh up to 5 pounds and a helmet is required for safety when walking through the Coulters. Her sculptural encasement for the cone has a velvet and codura covering and is placed in the vault at the Confidence Lab, Placerville, CA. Though not on the endangered list, some of the California fires destroyed many of the remaining stands. Here, according to Abeles, the pine cone with its seeds is displayed like the Hope Diamond in the vault.

Photo: Caitlin Thompson



The Vault

A poem by Taylor Graham, the inaugural Poet Laureate for El Dorado County from 2016-2018. This is one of several poems written in response to elements of the installation, *Resilience - A Living Room*.

A venerable pine cone like a sacred hat, burnished wood-tones on ebony pedestal. This is where they keep precious things dormant but alive. Seeds. Pine and fir, hope for generations of breathing life like sunlight secrets, safe in a black box, lamplight beacon in a dark cabin in wilderness; like our future.



Frankenstein's Heart, 2022
Mixed Media
13" x 10"
Created for a limited edition print to support Side Street Projects

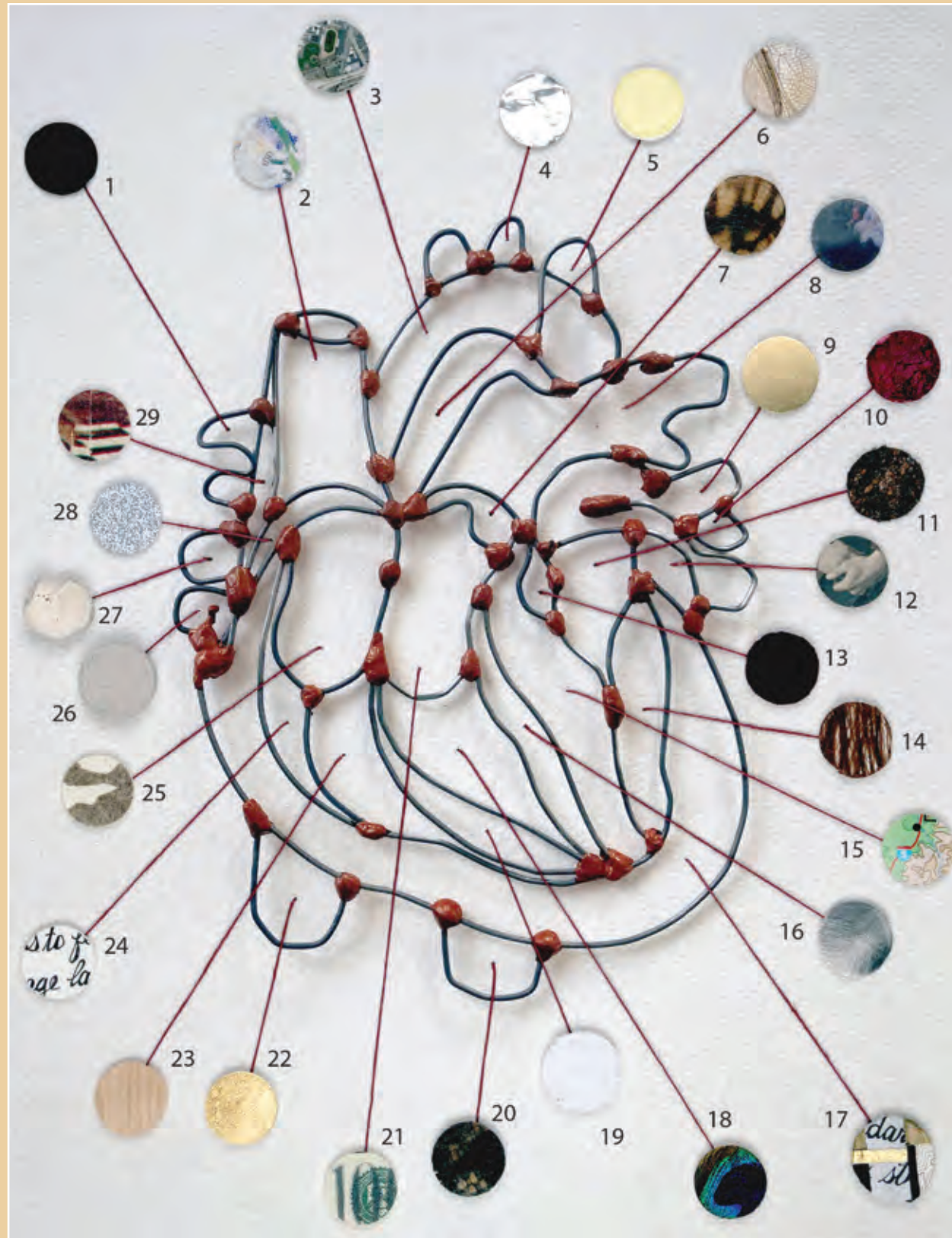
Frankenstein's Heart is an inventory of materials that I have used in my work for the past four decades. These are more than aesthetic choices and I see them as a glossary of terms to describe the fragile or morose, the memorable and grotesque, the sincere or hurtful, and the harmful yet tender. Rather than looking for clever tropes, the material speaks clearly while waiting for the sensitive listener.

I made the first *Frankenstein's Heart* in 1993 for the survey exhibition, *Encyclopedia Persona*, and this artwork brings the visual language to a full circle.



Frankenstein's Heart, 1993
Mixed Media construction
21.5" x 16" x 2"
Created for the exhibition catalog,
Kim Abeles: Encyclopedia Persona
A-Z: A Fifteen Year Survey, Fellows of Contemporary Art
Collection of Karen Moss
and David Familian

Right:
Legend for Frankenstein's Heart, 2022
Mixed media
13" x 10"
Created for a limited edition print to support Side Street Projects



1. cinefoil 2. handmade paper from junk mail and constructed from trash 3. aerial photographs 4. aluminum 5. chiffon over steel frameworks 6. insect wings and bodies 7. turtle shells 8. duratrans, video, and light 9. brass and hardware 10. roses and baby's breath 11. soil and ashes 12. photographs found, performed, and devised 13. velvet, satin, and codura 14. hair 15. maps 16. steel 17. weaving

and stitching 18. feathers and pigeon feet 19. identification documents and audio recordings 20. used welding blankets and paint drop cloths 21. currency 22. metallic foil and mirror 23. aged, burned, and haunted wood 24. ink on paper and personal correspondence 25. smog and smoke 26. concrete and clay 27. bones and teeth 28. sand and glass 29. imagery fused onto fabric and anything



Sweet Dreams, 2006
Multiple videos embedded in wall created with hand-drawn, pigment prints; welded steel and chiffon baby furniture; ancillary artworks
Originally commissioned for the Sun Valley Center for the Arts, Sun Valley, Idaho

The multi-media installation, *Sweet Dreams*, combines sculpture, video, and photographic imagery to create a baby's room that is inspired by the issues surrounding the landscape of the Sun Valley, Idaho. The room's wallpaper is printed with scenes of the majestic mountains and vistas of Sun Valley, and small sections of the pattern are animated by video footage of the region. The nursery contains elements that portray Nature's contradictions and the politics of unbridled beauty.

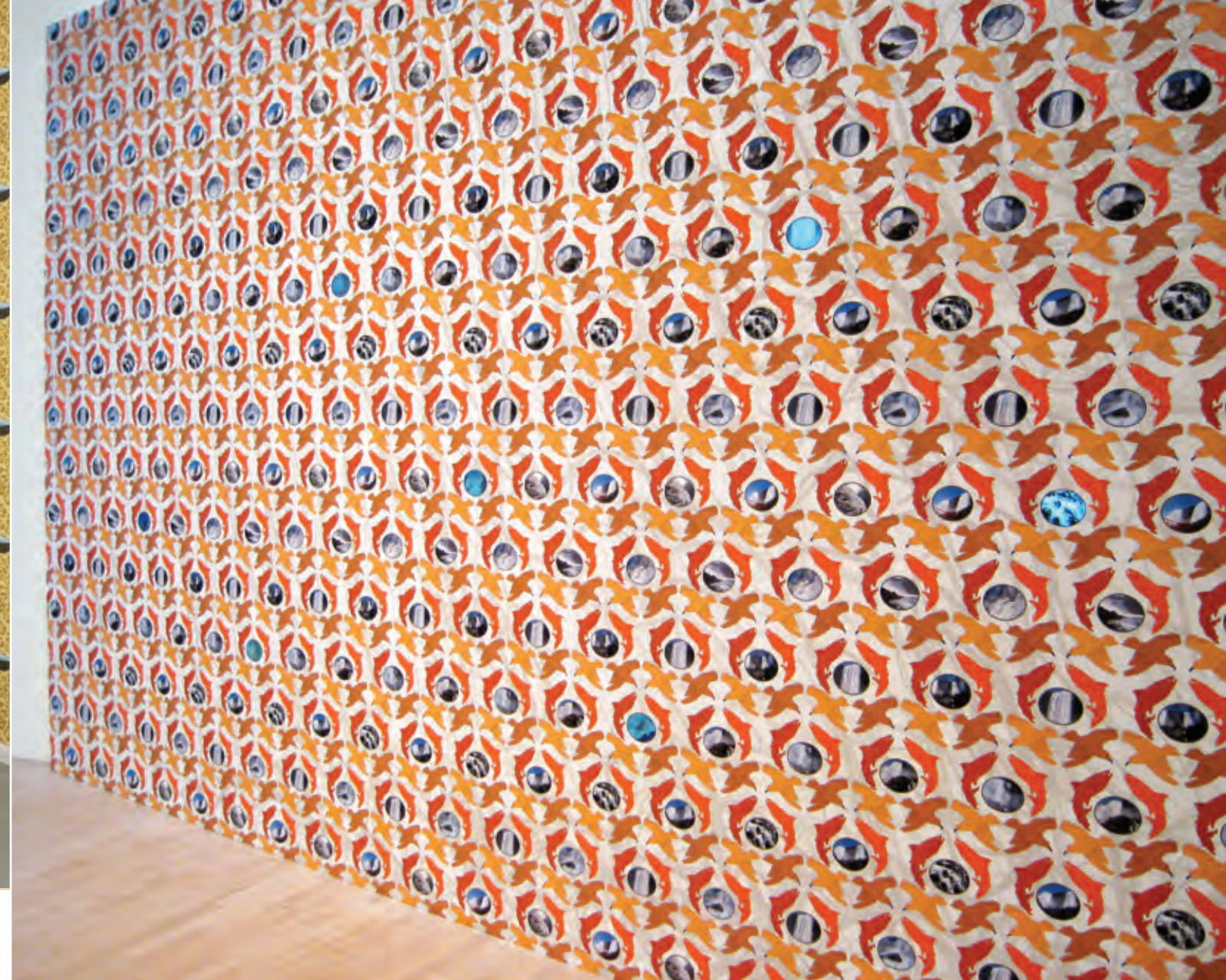
Children are taught how to observe Nature from the time they are infants. They are given stuffed animals and picturesque storybooks to portray the environment, to keep it at an ideal distance, and to reframe its relationship to us.

Sweet Dreams as an installation creates its narrative through individual artworks. A child's pillow, for example, is inset with a monitor showing an endless video loop of local sheep as they are herded for grazing. The dusty herd does not describe the fluffy, floating sheep of a child's dream, yet the contradiction implies our tourist status within the natural world. Like the wallpaper of *Sweet Dreams*, we are involved in the culturalization of Nature.



Sweet Dreams Pillow, 2006
Video embedded in chiffon pillow 10" x 18"
Collection of Jeri Wolfson

Detail of *Sweet Dreams* wallpaper and embedded video



Thunder of Waters, 2007
Multiple videos with sound and images of Niagara Falls embedded in wall created with hand-drawn, pigment prints 10' x 20'
Installation view at the exhibition, *Touched: Armory Artists & Social Engagement*, curated by Noel Korten for the Armory Center for the Arts, Pasadena





She Said I Found This Sparrow and Thought of You I Said, 1982
 Dried sparrow, book of repeated bird image, metal, fabric, feathers
 56" x 34" x 18"
 Collection of the artist and in the memory of William Bartman

Artist Doni Silver Simons and I shared a studio on Broadway in downtown Los Angeles beginning in 1980. It was the beloved Victor Clothing Building that found a home for studios of many artists including Anna Homier, John Valadez, Lari Pittman, and also LACE gallery and High Performance Magazine. One day, Doni came to the studio and held out her hand with something wrapped in a handkerchief. It was a dead sparrow that she had found days before. She knew that I would want it since I had used pigeon feet, cicada shells, tiny egg shells and bird bones in some of my sculptures. I made a wood and fabric box to dry the bird out my studio

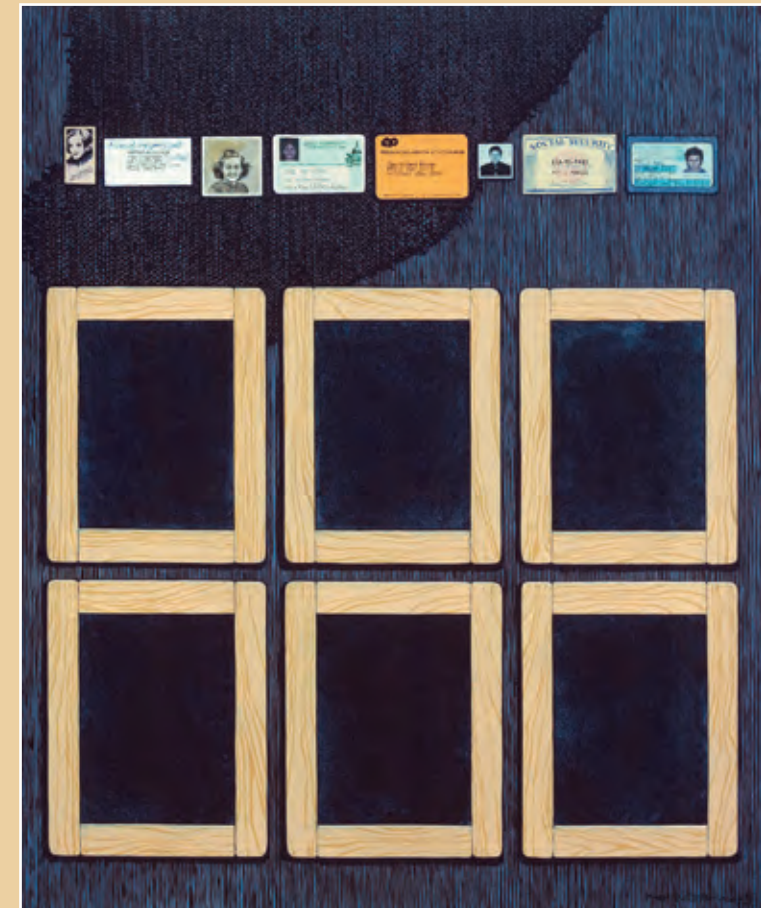


window. The box was like the one you see in the suspended sculpture, and the view in the photograph is the view onto Broadway where the Million Dollar Theater and the Pharmacia were important landmarks to many Angelenos. One day when I was looking out the window, I noticed that the people below on the street and the small sparrow were the same size from this vantage. It was striking the way the people fluttered past, so alone yet so much like a flock. This is a shrine of that window, this singular bird, and the crowds surrounding each of us.



For today, the struggle for education is also one of class or social status. We have entered a new phase of the struggle, where wealth defines the quality of education, and slogans like “no child left behind” are not substantiated with money or support for teachers and classrooms in public schools. The beauty of humans is seen in the idea that, despite neglectful governments, families and individuals locate dignity.

Left:
Documents K-12, 2004
 Handcrafted table with personal artifacts and digital printouts of documents including landmark court cases for establishing the equal rights for an education in the United States.
 6' diameter
 Collection of California African American Museum, Los Angeles
 Documents K-12 was created for the 2004 exhibition, Through the Gates: Brown vs Board of Education, curated by M.U.L.E. (Isabelle Lutterodt and Karin Pleasant) for CAAM



Tabula Rasa, 1977
 Acrylic on canvas
 34" x 28"

During the mid-1970s, Abeles concentrated on trompe l'oeil paintings with personal/psychological themes. Paintings of official identification, documents, and photographs were frequent elements in the paintings.

Documents

Art that provides the viewer with riveting portrayals of nature or society, serves to re-engage a person with the physical world; this is where positive change has a possibility to take place. If one does not love the world, that same person will not imagine a need to protect it.

2011

Documents K-12 presents the text of Brown vs Board of Education and other documents of significance to the desegregation of schools and equality of education in the U.S. The documents, shown together with private legal documents and artifacts of school-age children from many locales and time periods, express the personal and public consequence of assessments and forms of achievement. The piece speaks to the

deeper importance we each place on our own performance and goals in contrast to the unconvincing assessments of success as judged by testing, statistics, and enforcement. In the end, even the great victories seen in documents like Brown vs Board are more succinctly defined by the individuals who carried it through the struggle, and the heroes/heroines who continue the daily efforts for equality.

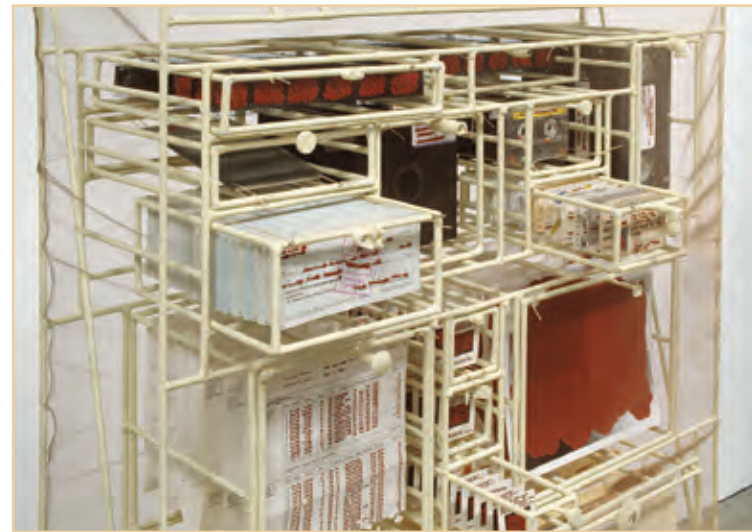


Letter-Objects, and other details in *Documents K-12*





Details of The Truth Palace



The Truth Palace, 1991
Welded steel, netting, identification documents marked with red pigment
78" x 35" x 12"
Collection of Barbara Cohn
Photo: Robert Wedemeyer

Excerpt from Kim Abeles: Encyclopedia Persona A-Z, 1993

Habeus corpus. *To have a body; a legal term referring to the need to present a person for judgment; purported to protect the innocent.*

Overview. All of my work begins - like most artists - from a personal occurrence which becomes a broader theme upon development of the work and interaction with viewers.

For example, though I know the origination point of *The Truth Palace*, in the final assessment it is about the identity of the individual in contemporary society defined by external proofs of existence. The sheer overlay is really skin; the red refers to blood; and in a sense the crossed-out data at once removes its validity yet maintains its burden. Society forces us into these rules and definitions (in medieval times it was

strictly family lineage that defined our futures - we more or less maintain this today of course), but we are allowed our souls, even if that same society can nearly strip it bare.

In other words, we live in a society where even if I can touch you, your flesh, you don't exist if you don't have your paperwork. This could apply to people needing visas or medical insurance or people in legal cases where paperwork is needed for proof. In the latter case, or perhaps in all the examples, the paper confirmation may not even hold value since information is still up for interpretation or acceptance, under the weight of pre-existing laws, etc. Ironically, it was a legal mediator who purchased *The Truth Palace*, so perhaps my personal needs for making pieces creates a languageless aura around the work.



Self-Portrait (Pope Joan) is comprised of the originals of all of my personal identifying documents: starting with the birth certificate. My social security card, faculty IDs from universities, Welfare Department Food Stamp card, and Copper 7-IUD card demarcate moments. The documents cover the back and seat of the reconfigured chair. There is an opening in the seat crossed by woven wires and reflected in a mirror on the floor beneath the chair. That opening recalls the "dung chair" which, according to legend, was used to verify if a pope had testicles or not. According to lore, this type of chair became necessary after a 9th-century woman, Johannes Anglicus, disguised herself as a man and rose in the church hierarchy to finally become pope. Her gender was



Self-Portrait (Pope Joan), 2016
Abeles' identification since her birth in 1952 to the present, modified chair, metal, mirror
49" x 16" x 19"
Photo: Ken Marchionno

only discovered after she gave birth. She was then tortured and killed for having the hubris to think that she, a female, could run the church.

It is mystifying in the 21st century, with all the technology, philosophy, and wisdom in reach, that gender, race, and religious differences continue to evoke suspicion and fear. The piece is intended to prompt the viewer to imagine sitting on the seat. The mirror peers upward. I noted how viewers looked all around and under and through to analyze the contents of the cards, scrutinizing an entire life placed in this one spot. Here is a life or a portrait or a self in the story of another.



3.9, 1994-2018
 Repurposed embossed tin from the now defunct
 Berger Beads, wood, audio, light, objects
 106" x 30" x 31"
 Photos: Henry Krusoe



Beginning in 1994, I collected audio for an artwork entitled 3.9. I collected a minute of sound each day for 1440 minutes in order to capture a full 24-hour period. It took 3.9 years to reach 1440 days/1440 minutes.

Time and geography reorganize as minutes of a day. Using a master clock and ignoring conventional time-keeping, the construct became the container of my life.

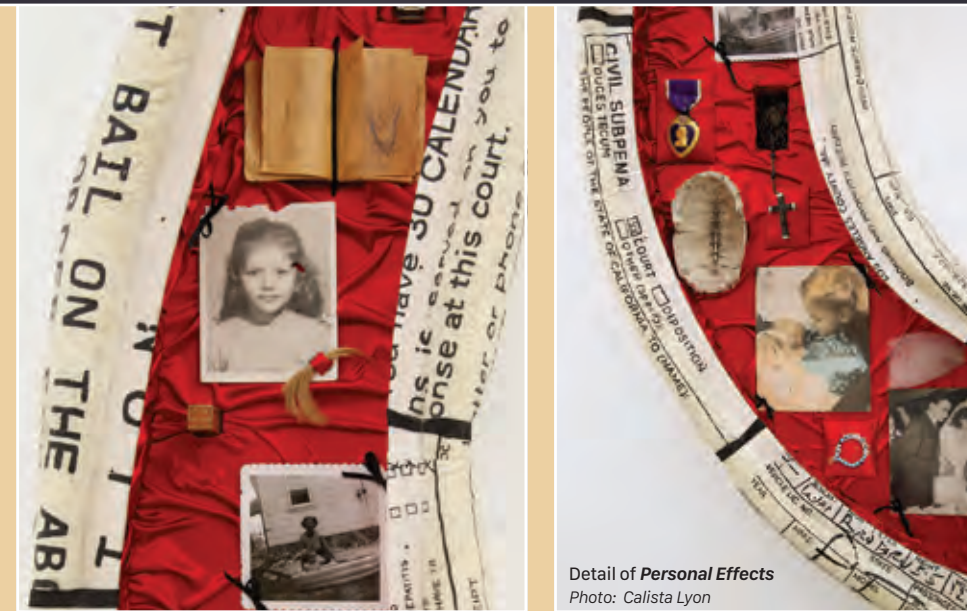
The piece spans both sides of the equator, and the first of these audio fragments was gathered nearly 30 years ago. My daughter Zoë, who can be heard often in the minutes, is now a 34-year-old mom. Voices of my grandparents, or friends like artist Karl Matson, all of whom have died, rise from the audiotapes as if it's a few hours past. Conversations with lovers remind me of best choices and worst mistakes. The minutes range from snoring roommates, trips to the dentist, to city-wide cheers in Rio during the World Cup.

I started 3.9 at a difficult time in my life, when a minute was about all I could bear in a day. I see now that it is an unabashed accounting of a life, excavated decades later, as if a ghost trailed to this moment.



Personal Effects, 1993
 Personal objects, excerpts
 from legal correspondence
 painted onto fabric, satin,
 wood, metal
 36" x 36" x 31"

Personal Effects contains many of the objects one would normally pass along to the next generation of family; in this case, it contains my uncle's Purple Heart, a swatch of my mom's wedding veil, and my baby bracelet. It also contains other things of personal value, including my grandmother's turtle's shell, the urine sample for my pregnancy test, and my first book drawn as a child defining myself as an angel and a devil. The surrounding painting that encases the horseshoe/magnet, replicates legal and financial problems I encountered, notices to appear, and jail receipts. That black square is the tabula rasa of a life. It's a subject I used in early works when I was a tromp l'oeil painter, and that blank slate portrays a sense of existential (im)possibility.



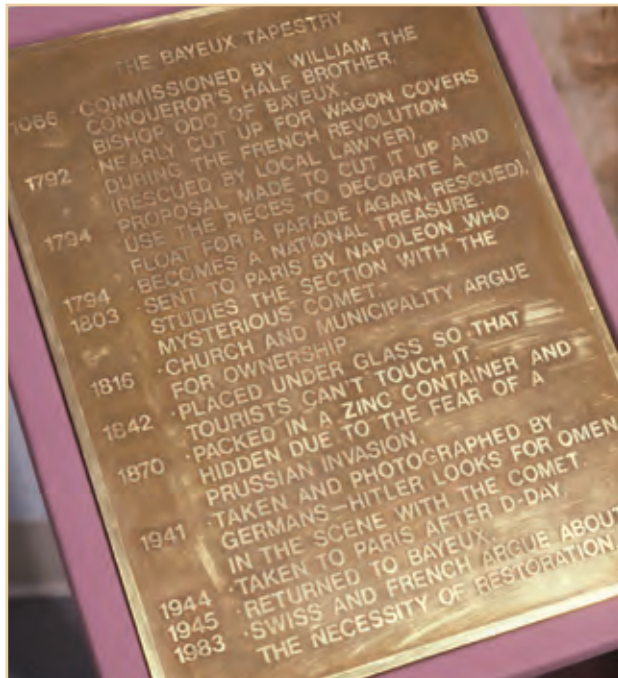
Detail of *Personal Effects*
 Photo: Calista Lyon

While listening to NPR, I heard the discussion about the worth of the *Bayeux Tapestry*, and the image of my grandmother's ironing board cover flashed through my thoughts. According to the news report, the Swiss and French were debating whether to restore it, dependent on its worth. It is the word "worth" that still sticks in my head.

This piece led to a progression of works called, *Fact-Fiction Boxes* (1983-86), housed in the cabinetry familiar to museums and collections. The titles often infer the subjects: *Leon Trotsky's Eyeglasses*, *First Fork*, and *The Stolen Meridians*. History is often presented to us in a display, removed from its original context. I refer to the methods of such displays in the sculptures: presentation cases and cabinets, the titles of objects and structures, plaques, and photographic documents. It is a way of juxtaposing the artificial with the real, the "artificial" becoming its own surmised reality.

A Problem with Maintenance, 1983

Ironing board that belonged to Abeles' grandmother, "Temperature Control" box (photographs and metal), etched brass plaque with history of *Bayeux Tapestry*, metallic thread that passes through the cabinet sides, wood, plexiglass
 Dimensions of case: 74" x 24" x 17"
 Dimensions of stand: 40" x 24"
 Gift of the Stuart Spence and Judith Vida-Spence Collection.
 Collection of Los Angeles County Museum of Art (LACMA)
 Photos: James Franklin, David Familian



Self Portrait with Files II, 2020

Original photographs 1995
 Pigment print, Edition of 25
 14.75" x 15.75"

The piles contain all the files from my shows at that time, the plans, lists, and reviews. It's the kind of stuff a person lugs around, or it's the longings of CV building, or the laurels where one would only wish to rest. I photographed the original images with film and a timer on my camera. Subtitles for the selections in this print are: pulley gut, birthing, oxen, and stack.



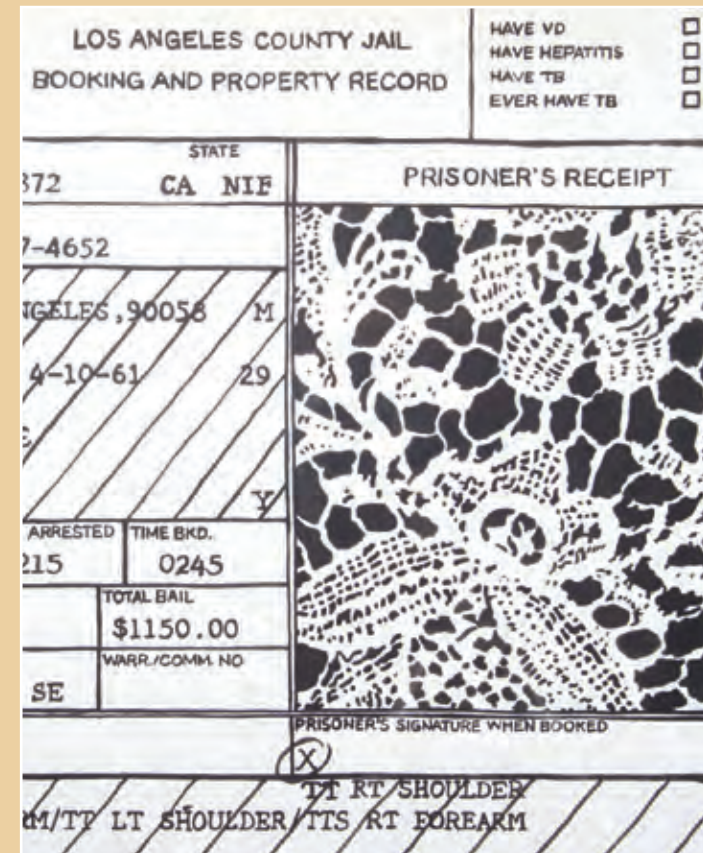
United in Marriage, 1995
 Netting from wedding veil,
 Acrylic on ceramic plate
 14" diameter



Jay Walking Ticket Plate, 1995

Stencil (from original ink drawing) on ceramic plate
 13.75" diameter

Artist's Proof; Edition made for the Pasadena Arts Alliance



Families Waiting at the County Jail, 1994/2023
 Pigment print of ink drawing created for the Foundation for Art Resources, Inc (FAR) project,
Color This!
 Edition of 5
 18" x 14"



Left:
Boy, Herd, Hole, Threw, Sound
 From *Dead Sea Scrolls and The Book of Parts*, 1984
 Pigment on fabric showing the actual hole where Muhammad's older cousin, Juma' Muhammad, located the Scrolls, oil paints on wood, metal, coins, painted toy goats and sheep, carved slingshot with coin, ceramic replicas of a Dead Sea Scroll jar, photograph of Muhammad by Dr. W.L. Reed
 82" x 27" x 22"



Previous page right column:
Kando: Conjurer of the Dead Sea Scrolls
 From *Dead Sea Scrolls and The Book of Parts*, 1984
 Khalil Eskander Shahin also known as "Kando" and his friend George photographed by John M. Allegro, international junk, photographs of excavated Scroll jar, glass, fabric, bicycle wheel, metal, wood, demonetized notes
 78" x 28" x 25"

Right: Detail
Boy, Herd, Hole, Threw, Sound

Below: Detail
Kando: Conjurer of the Dead Sea Scrolls





Here It Is
From Dead Sea Scrolls and The Book of Parts, 1984
 Plaster casts taken from a mold of a mountain surface, Father Grollenberg's photograph of archaeologist pointing to Muhammad's cave, wood, modified ladders, enamels 69" x 44" x 36"

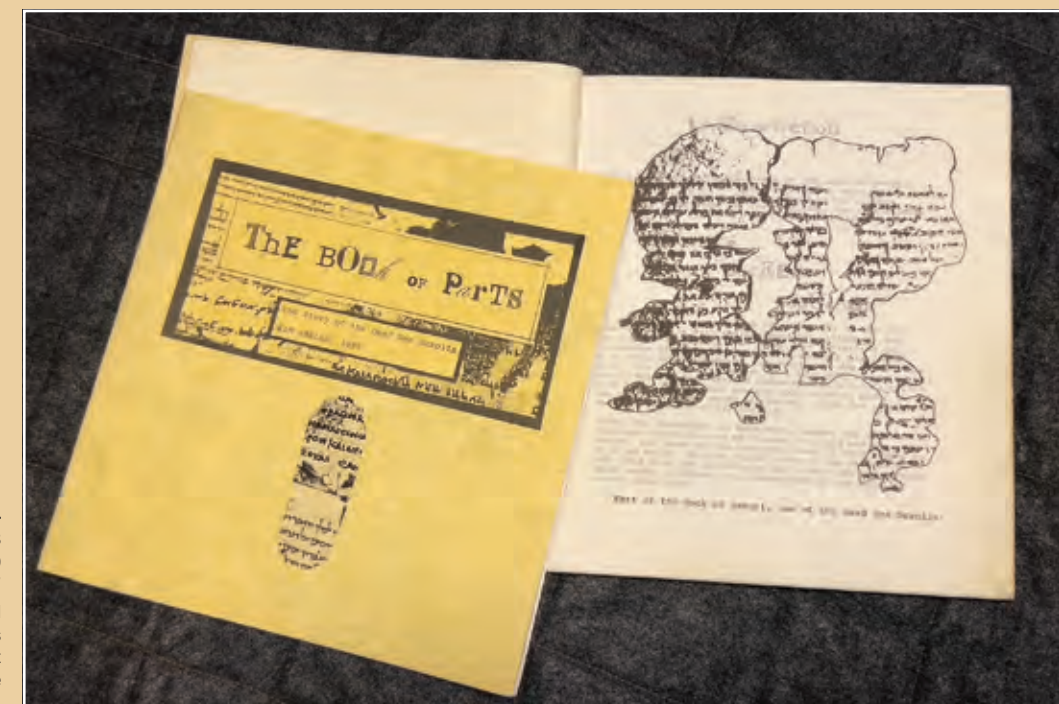
An innocent beginning marked the discovery of the 2000-year-old Dead Sea Scrolls with their subsequent historical and theological relevance. In the Qumran region, the first cave containing one collection of the jars and protected parchments was found by a young nomadic Bedouin, Muhammad, who was tending to his herd. The boy went in search of a lost goat and to pacify his boredom, threw a stone into a cliffside hole. Rather than hearing rock striking rock, he was startled by the sound of pottery inside the cave, no doubt the home of active spirits.

Kando, the junkdealer in Bethlehem, bought the Scrolls from the nomads because he thought he could use the leather for shoes at his cobbler's shop if they proved to be of no

value. And scholars photographed them amid the chaos in the streets. The year was 1947, and the United Nation's announcement to split Palestine brought a discordant mix of cheers and anger that could be heard throughout Jerusalem. Each day the street borders designating the various ethnic and religious sectors shifted so that the boundaries never offered safety. The availability of electricity and supplies (including film to photograph the Scrolls) was also volatile. Explosions, confusion, suspicion, and sniperfire became backdrops for daily life. In this setting and through these streets, the scholars made their investigations about the Scrolls and prepared to photograph them, if need be, by the light of day.



Boy Heard
From Dead Sea Scrolls and The Book of Parts, 1985
 Functioning metronome with metal "stone" which strikes a ceramic replica of a Scroll jar and an asphalt "rock" 28" x 35" x 15"



The Book of Parts - The Story of the Dead Sea Scrolls, 1988
 Xerox book Edition of 100 9" x 8.5"
 The artist book contains background information and detailed documents about the seventeen artworks that combine to create a narrative about the discovery of the Dead Sea Scrolls.



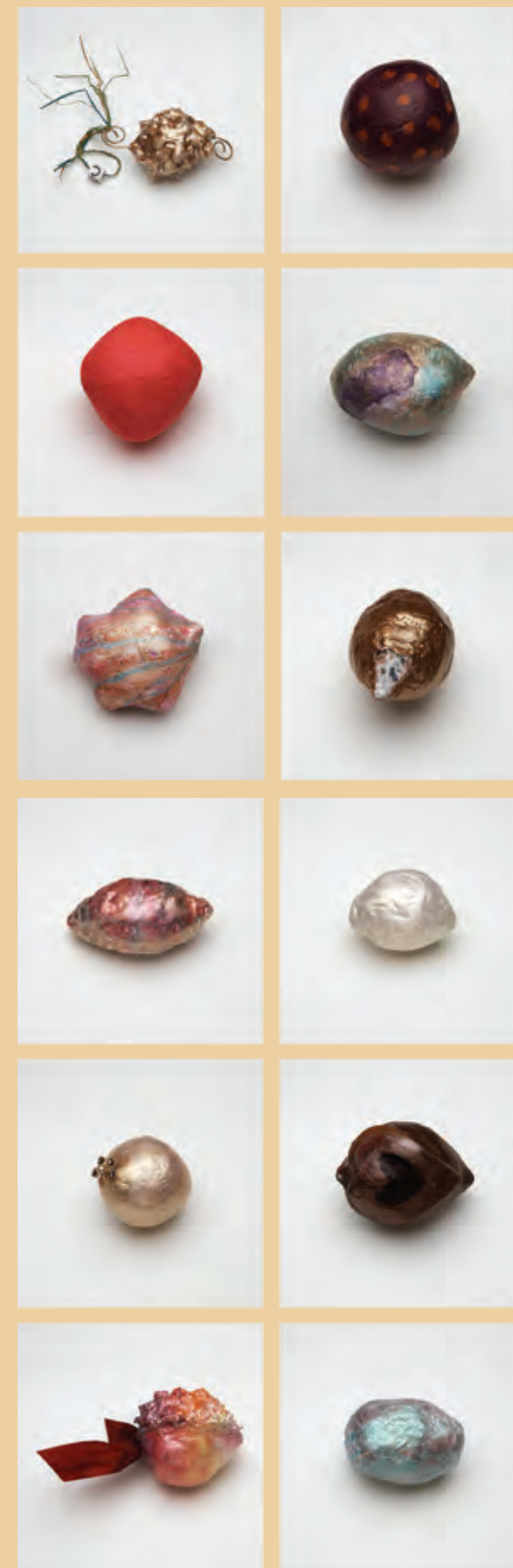
Body of Voices

The individual is not a separate organism moving around independently, but rather a dynamic cog in the movement of all things from past to future. I am awestruck by our efforts, our foibles and our successes, and by the way these three possibilities are inseparable.

2011

Pearls of Wisdom: End the Violence is a process-driven artwork created by Abeles in collaboration with 800 individuals who were moving beyond domestic violence, advocates for them, and the non-profit, A Window Between Worlds. Two years of workshops led to the "pearls" created by families and supporters. Using the metaphor of valuable pearls formed inside oysters in response

to a harmful irritant, participants transformed memories of domestic pain into objects and shared texts. The sculptural table articulates the process, and the complete installation contains the 800 pearls. The installation also includes books like *Handbook for Living* which contain photographs of each pearl along with the participant's words of advice for ending violence.



The workshop for *Pearls of Wisdom: End the Violence* relies on the metaphor of the pearl and the visceral strength of process. Each participant begins with an object that symbolizes the abuser or an event. Mylar paper provides a reflective surface for writing or drawing, followed by the wrapping of the content with colorful yarns and plaster bandages. Sometimes people would talk during the workshops, and most often they seemed in a mutual reverie, occasionally helping each other to learn the process.

Pearls of Wisdom - End the Violence, 2011
Layers of objects, handwriting on mylar paper, yarns and threads, plaster gauze, plaster, satin shelves and ribbon, mixed media table with embedded video monitors. 3" - 4" diameter each
6' diameter table
Photos: Ken Marchionno

Photos: Aaron Pipkin Tamayo





Always keep spare keys.

Oh they need another opportunity we think. There's no opportunity.

Do it for the children.

Take care of yourself and don't expect someone else to do it.

You need to turn that corner and not look back.

Be brave and practice loving yourself, believing in what you do, so you can get out of it.

If he wants you to be perfect, run ... run now!

Truth is light, healing and freedom from shame.

If I had found someone who had told me [that], I might have made that decision way back when, and I wouldn't have waited through 8 years of suffering at the side of this violent man.

Say no to violence.

Don't think you need a man to complete you.

Neighbors should care for each other.

Change for the better is possible.

We are all responsible for the good of the community.

Boundaries have saved me from even myself.

Women should help each other and be welcoming to those who need our help.

I want to keep fighting to be the person I want to be, rather than have the abuse define me.

Move on.

You will open your wings when you're ready, and believe me you will fly.

Help our children to be happy and take them out of the violence that makes them feel worthless.

Men can be victims too.

Ayudemos a nuestros hijos a ser felices y saquemoslos de la violencia que los hace sentir devaluados.



Pearls of Wisdom - End the Violence, Kim Abeles in collaboration with A Window Between Worlds, AWBW's Community Arts Advocate, Sandra Mueller, and 800 participants. Workshops, exhibitions, blog, books, and events took place from 2009 to 2011. First venues were at the Korean Cultural Center and Skirball Cultural Center, Los Angeles. The work continues to be exhibited. Funded by the James Irvine Foundation, and City of Los Angeles Cultural Affairs Department.

Walk a Mile in My Shoes
2014
Bronze elements, concrete with engraving, text cast in concrete, photographic ceramic tiles, and handmade pavers detailed with tile shards.
Obama Blvd and Martin Luther King Blvd is 700 sq feet and Obama Blvd and Jefferson Blvd is 20,000 sq feet.
Commissioned by the City of Los Angeles, Department of Cultural Affairs and Department of Public Works



Walk a Mile in My Shoes – Civil Rights Marchers, 2014
Pigment print
24" x 18" Edition of 25
Photos: Ken Marchionno

the King Center in Atlanta. The platform shows a photograph of that display, along with important documents from the 1960s. An AP photograph of the Selma march and another of Dr. King removing his shoes at the Gandhi shrine during his visit to India, define personal and public moments. The platform includes two bronze sections with biographical narratives for each of the sixty individuals represented by their shoes. The biographies focus on specific actions of their activism.



Walk a Mile in My Shoes is a permanent repurposing of two traffic medians along Los Angeles' Obama Blvd corridor. The idea for this artwork was inspired by a wish for all of us to walk in the footsteps of Martin Luther King Jr. and those who walked in solidarity with the Civil Rights Movement. The site contains images of shoes belonging to Civil Rights marchers and colleagues of Dr. King, photographed from the collection of Xernona Clayton in Atlanta. The photographic tiles are installed with hundreds of handmade pavers to complete the circle. The artwork includes a 7-foot diameter platform with a bronze replica of Dr. King's shoes that are displayed at

1.
Our faces are the future
even as they are maps
back to langs, shtetls, haciendas long forgotten.
Our voices rise in 135 languages,
each a translation of hope everlasting.
Journeys that began in the savannas of Ethiopia and the highlands of Scotland end here where manzanita tints the morning air and the Pacific's ceaseless murmur is a call to celebrate.

2.
We move on 20,000 miles of cement and asphalt,
waking each day with the hope
it will be our best.
The best day to throw away the shackles of poverty.
The best day to act in the name of beauty.
The best day to stand shoulder to shoulder for justice.
The best day to converse with an elder.
The best day to listen to the whispers of a child.
The best day to call our leaders in the name of fairness for all.

We are all inheritors,
keepers of space and land,
keepers of ideas and faith.

3.
Step thoughtfully
there is passion here
its flame spreads quickly
think
love,
justice,
empathy,
creativity
you too will burn.

4.
The life of one is small
if I walk in your shoes
I will know the lives of two
more stars for me to see
more friends more love
more opportunities to act
your shoes take paths
mine would not have known

5.
So, what do you do next now
that you've marked the steps
of others? Are you big enough
to fill those shoes? Who will
want to fill yours when you're gone?

6.
Will our rivers flow tomorrow?
Will our land nurture new seed?
Will our dreams sprout and spread
their roots in fertile soil?



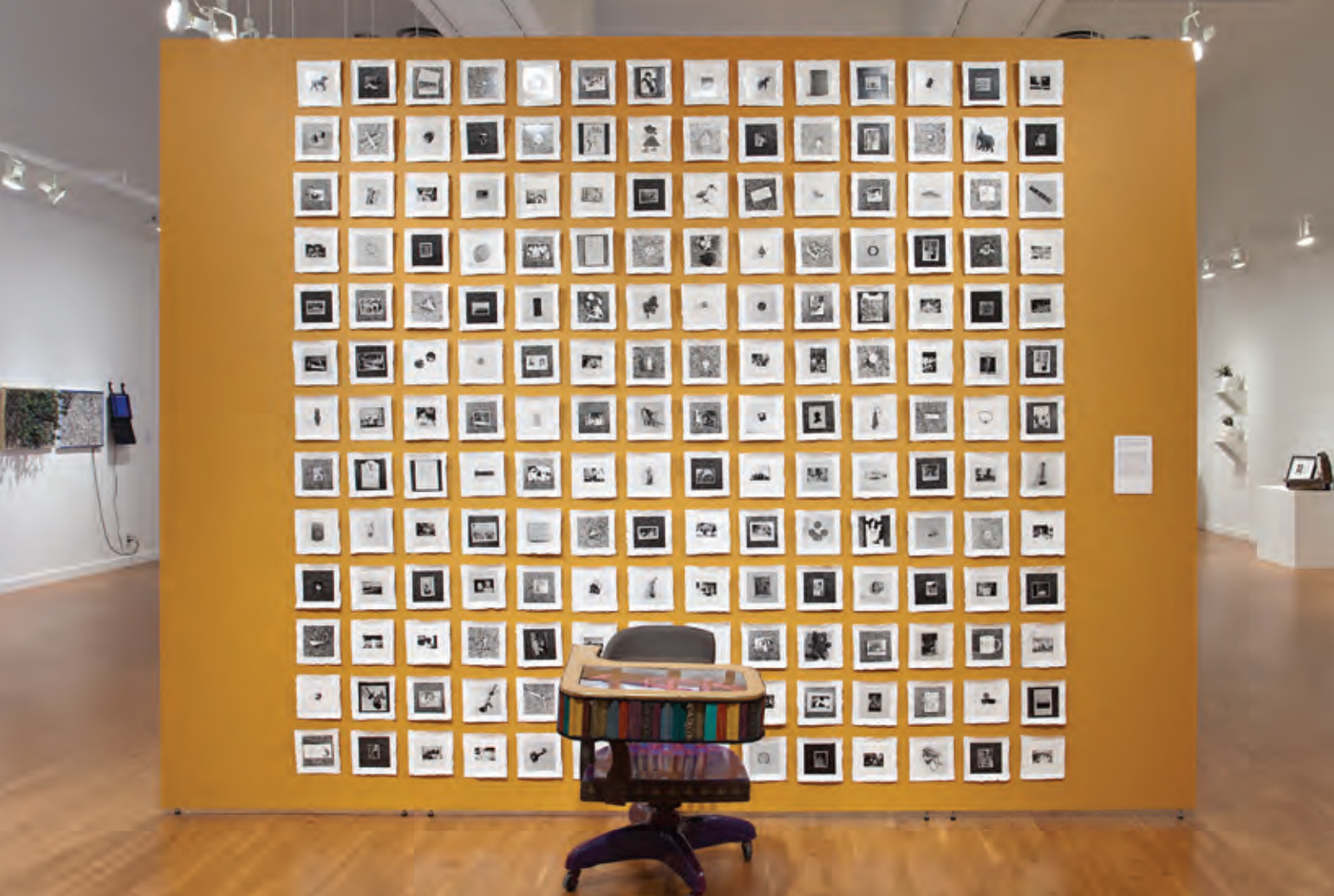
The second site for *Walk a Mile in My Shoes* transformed an unused median into a mini-park. At this location, shoes and biographies of local activists are represented. These include a broad range of individuals who are leaders for the betterment of environmental issues and social justice. The biographies emphasize the activism that often began during their teenage years. The goal of the artwork is to bring forward our individual and collective actions.



Photos: Ken Marchionno



The poem by Beverly Lafontaine was written for the public artwork. The six sections appear on three benches and the text is positioned so that a reading aloud is accomplished with two people facing each other.



Above:
Collective Diary (Dedicated to People with AIDS), 1989-93
 An installation composed of 200 photographs of objects and scrapbook photos belonging to people with AIDS (PWAs), mixed media chair 10' x 15'
 Photo: Brian Forest



Left:
Found Voices (Dedicated to People with AIDS), 1989
 Sculptural components by Kim Abeles, interviews by Kim Abeles and Peter Bergmann, sound design and editing by Barbara McBane. Table and chairs made of wood, soil, felt, and satin, suspended chiffon chair, objects belonging to PWAs, small photographs of objects with handwritten alphabets found globally
 7' diameter table
 Photo: Patrick Newcombe



Right:
Eau de Lourdes
From The Image of St. Bernadette, 1987
 Marbleized bicycle wheel, glass bottles filled with water, altered piano bench, satin, pearls, gold leaf, enamel, soil, mirror-lined box, movie still from *The Song of Bernadette*, backwards text placed under bench and correctly reflected in mirror, currency
 56" x 3.5" x 20.5"
 Collection of the City of Santa Monica



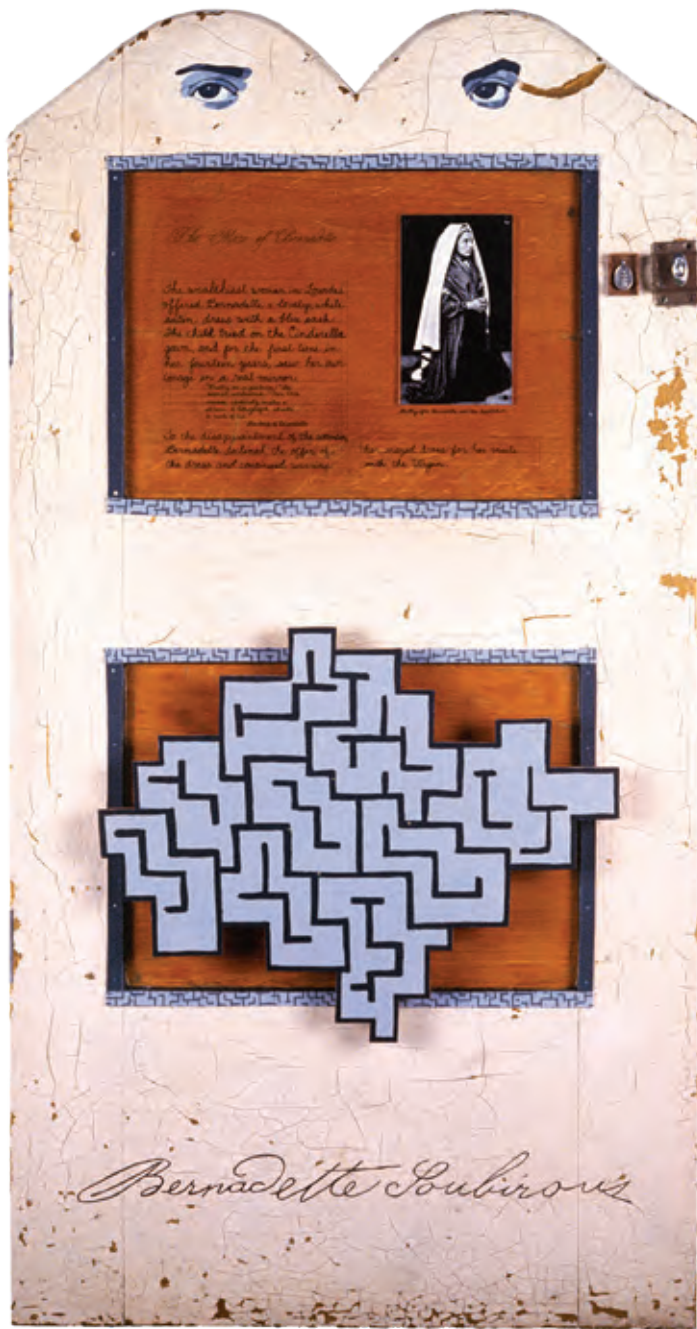
Detail of *Children! Sit Still!*
 Photo: Calista Lyon



Selections from *The Image of St. Bernadette*
 Installation view at Fresno Art Museum



Right:
Children! Sit Still! From *The Image of St. Bernadette*, 1987
 Acrylic painting of St. Bernadette on found photo-sensitized fabric, enamel, metal, altered piano stool, violin rests, mirror of base which correctly shows the signature of St. Bernadette (written backwards underneath stool), lace, satin
 44" x 18.5" x 18.5"
 Photo: Calista Lyon



The Maze of Bernadette, from The Image of St. Bernadette, 1987
 Repurposed door, Acrylic painting of St. Bernadette's eyes and an enlargement of the pattern on the dress she wore when she saw the Virgin Mary, medallions, text
 45" x 23.5"



Right top: The Head of Bernadette, 2017
 Second edition of cast porcelain vases first created in 1987



Right bottom: Pachinko (It's a Beautiful Day!) From The Image of St. Bernadette, 1987
 Marbleized acrylic on rewired Pachinko game; stencil on acrylic, dried rosebud, photograph, and glass sphere
 31.5" x 20.25" x 3.5"
 Collection of Debra and Larry Poteet
 Photo: Ken Marchionno



Souvenir Dispensary From The Image of St. Bernadette, 1987
 Souvenir cards for St. Bernadette, altered cosmetic dispenser, photographs of Abeles' painting of St. Bernadette bald, locks of hair, currency, enamel.
 21.5" x 12" x 13"
 Collection of Kristin S. Escalante



Willing Suspension of Disbelief From The Image of St. Bernadette, 1987
 Acrylics on canvas showing patterns on St. Bernadette's clothing, then, reconstructed into the complete garment, photograph of the saint with the same clothing, acrylics on canvas, metal, wood and bicycle wheel
 68" x 54" x 22"
 Collection of the Museum of Contemporary Art Los Angeles
 Photo: Daniel J. Martinez



Reliquary Curio for the Victorian Mourning Pin From The Image of St. Bernadette, 1987
 Altered cabinet, bones, hair, Victorian mourning pin, acrylic painting of Bernadette post-mortem, money, satin, text
 46" x 18" x 18"
 Collection of Charlie Miller



To Sit As Ladder (In Honor of Rosa Parks), describes the life of Rosa Parks, the civil rights activist who is known as the "Mother of the Movement." She is well-known for her courageous act of confrontation to the bus segregation laws. On December 1, 1955 in Montgomery, Alabama, Parks was arrested for refusing to give up her seat to a white man. Her legal battle and the subsequent bus boycott gave rise to the Civil Rights Movement and its leaders. My sculpture offers a timeline of events that led up to that important day, tracing Rosa Parks' history of activism.

***To Sit As Ladder (In Honor of Rosa Parks)*, 1991**
 Reconstructed 1930s chair with enamels, photographs, quotes, and a radiator
 67" x 22" x 12"
 Collection of the California African American Museum, Gift of Jack X. Fields
 Photo: David Familian





Glass Platform for Evita Perón, 1997
 5" x 3.5" x 7" (glass shoe) and
 7" x 21" x 21" (total dimensions)
 Solid glass shoe, satin pillow, and gold painted pennies
Abeles in collaboration with glass artists Therman Statom and John Christy

Evita's story evolves as the personal transformed into the status of icon and the commodification of an individual. Eva Perón is no longer herself, but instead, Madonna or Faye Dunaway. Her story is the Cinderella tale of the girl born into poverty who marries the prince who is the president. Complete with the overabundant beauty of a Disney color palette, she changes wardrobes, from a drab outfit in gray and neutrals to the fluff of netting in pastel pink, baby blue, and honeysuckle yellow. Evita, with the photographic regality of Jackie K. or a Princess of Hearts, helps Christian Dior gowns to float along the tiers as troupes of political penguins with cummerbunds flank her side. Crowds daze

longingly. The satin pillow that holds the solid glass shoe materializes the World of Walt, and its tassels dangle copper pennies turned into gold with enamel paint. Rags to riches! Robin Hood! "Don't cry for me, Argentina" reverberates from aerobics classes in Hollywood where men and women leap and squat to a disco beat.

In contrast to Eva Perón as celebrity, or as her best use of that celebrity, she is instrumental in the success of the suffrage bill for women's right to vote in 1947. She also works tirelessly in her creation of programs to help the impoverished. Her difficult childhood gives her a depth of



Evita As Official Portrait; As Madonna; As Fay; and Cinderella as Evita, 1997
 Mixed media installation including silkscreen wall paper, framed photographs of Evita in her Christian Dior gowns, pigment print pinwheels, gold-painted pennies, satin, and netting
 Variable dimensions
Installation at Art Resources Transfer (A.R.T., Inc.), New York

understanding for those in need. Evita is officially titled, Spiritual Leader of the Nation.

The tagged coins that appear on the mantel of the installation contain Evita's signature and her quote:

"If God gives me back my health, I will never wear jewels or beautiful dresses again. Nothing but a skirt and a blouse."

Eva Perón's debilitating cancer causes her to wear a plaster corset to prop her body upright during processions. This is in contrast to the Dior gowns she loves to wear at events. Tears and tears made out of mink. Don't cry for me! In life and beyond.





Other (In Memory of Ethel and Julius Rosenberg), 1987

Altered chair with burned legs and arms, copper foil, wire, handprint, "Rosenberg" written with wire, burned typewriter, visa and passport photographs
36.5" x 25" x 19"

Collection of Doug Simay

Photo: Daniel J. Martinez

Right: Imperial Shoeshine, 1982

Bronze-plated wingtips, brushes, shoe wax tins, "girlie" magazines photo transfers, wood, metal, acrylic, enamel, canvas, plexiglass, chiffon
73" x 52" x 34"

Collection of Laguna Art Museum, Gift of Art Resources Transfer, Inc.

Photo: David Familian

The exhibition, *Unknown Secrets - Art and the Rosenberg Era*, curated by Nina Felshin toured the U.S. from 1988 to 1991. The exhibit included sixty artworks made between the 1950s and 1980s, and discussed the Rosenberg-Sobell case, McCarthyism, and the Cold War. The project was part of the Rosenberg Era Art Project (REAP) directed by Rob A. Okun. The book, *The Rosenbergs - Collected Visions of Artists and Writers*, and a related documentary were produced. Shown in the article from a Boulder, Colorado newspaper is Robert Meeropol, son of Ethel and Julius Rosenberg, photographed with Okun. In 1990, Meeropol started the Rosenberg Fund for

Children, "to provide for the educational and emotional needs of children whose parents have suffered because of their progressive activities and who, therefore, are no longer able to provide fully for their children." Visit rfc.org to read more.

Venues for *Unknown Secrets* included Long Island University, San Diego State University, Pennsylvania State University, University Park; University of Colorado, Massachusetts College of Art, Kenyon College, Spertus Museum of Judaica, Addison-Ripley & Bordy Galleries, Spirit Square Center for the Arts, Vermont College Art Center, and San Francisco Jewish Community Museum.





Forty Days and Forty Nights (Forty Days of Smog), 1991
 Smog (particulate matter) on plexiglass, auto mufflers, detritus, chiffon, wood
 31.5" x 30" x 56"
 Installation view at the California College of the Arts and Crafts, Oakland, CA
 Photo: Ben Blackwell

Atmosphere

The horizon breathes like an autonomous organism with handwriting of a volatile hieroglyphic system. I am its stenographer and the arm of its turntable.

1986

The London Globe printed a new word "Smog," coined in a speech at the 1905 Public Health Congress. They considered it a public service to describe this phenomenon. The Smog Collectors materialize the reality of the air we breathe. I place cut, stenciled images on transparent or opaque plates or fabric, then leave these on rooftops and let the particulate matter in the heavy air fall upon them. After a period, from four days to a month typically, the stencil

is removed, and the image is revealed in smog. To quote a stranger who saw my first experiments, they are "footprints of the sky". We live in the contradiction that the dangers are out there, beyond, and that we are safe in our homes. Since the worst in our air can't be seen, Smog Collectors are both literal and metaphoric depictions of the current conditions of our life source. They are reminders of our industrial decisions: the road we took that seemed so modern.



Smog Collectors on rooftop circa 1990



Zoe's Highchair (Forty Days of Smog), Winter 1990/91
 Altered, painted highchair with food and setting made of smog (particulate matter)
 45" x 15" x 19"



Zoe's Bassinet (Twenty Days of Smog/Ten Days of Acid Rain), Spring 1991
 Altered bassinet with toys created in smog (particulate matter) and car mufflers for legs
 47.5" x 32" x 33"
 Collection of the City of Los Angeles



Detail of *Forty Days and Forty Nights (Forty Days of Smog), 1991*



George Bush's New World Order T.V. (Twenty Days of Smog/Ten Days of Acid Rain), Spring 1991
 Portrait in smog (particulate matter), welded stand with car muffler
 40" x 23" x 12"



Asher Brown Durand's "The Hunter" in Thirty Days of Smog, 2000
 Smog (particulate matter) on repurposed plexiglass; assemblage frame
 35" x 27"
 Original Durand painting credit: Collection of Arizona State University Art Museum. Durand, a painter from the Hudson River School, painted the landscape in 1846.



Smog Clock, 2019
 Smog (particulate matter) on glass, acrylics on paper, clock
 10" diameter



Detail of Give Us This Day (Twenty Days of Smog), 1992
 Smog (particulate matter) and acid air effect on silk, menu made of smog on acrylic, chairs made of chiffon on metal framework
 70" x 54"
 Created for Paradise Lost curated by Mimi Debruyn for the 1993 Cultural Centre of Berchem, Antwerp, Belgium



Dinner for Two in One Month of Smog, 2011
 Smog (particulate matter) on porcelain dinnerware and linen, chiffon chairs with metal framework
 38" x 49" x 28"
 Created for Swept Away: Dust, Ashes, and Dirt in Contemporary Art and Design, Museum of Arts and Design, New York
 Photo: Ken Marchionno



Presidential Commemorative Smog Plates (1992) presents 17 portraits of U.S. presidents from McKinley to George H.W. Bush made of smog (particulate matter) on porcelain plates with their quotations about the environment and business hand-lettered in gold. The plates were left out longer depending on the environment record of the president, 4-40 days. Shown here is Carter at 4 days of smog, and Reagan at 40 days.



In 2019, Abeles created *World Leaders in Smog* for *The Coming World: Ecology as the New Politics 2030-2100* curated by Snejana Krasteva and Ekaterina Lazareva at the Garage Museum of Contemporary Art, Moscow, Russia. The complete series includes ten world leaders who presented speeches at world climate summits from 2011 to 2018. The smog portraits are the official, government headshots, and the quotes are written on the plates in the language originally presented. The plates were exhibited at the 2019 *Chicago Expo* featuring the Natural Resources Defense Council.
Photo: Ken Marchionno

World Leaders in Smog, 2019
Smog (particulate matter) on porcelain plates; ceramic decals
10.5" diameter each
Emmanuel Macron (President, French Republic) with smog collected in Paris

Next page:
Sixty Days of Los Angeles Sky Patch
(View to the East) at Oberlin College, 1993





Sixty Days of Los Angeles Sky Patch (View to the East) at Allen Memorial Museum, Oberlin College, 1993



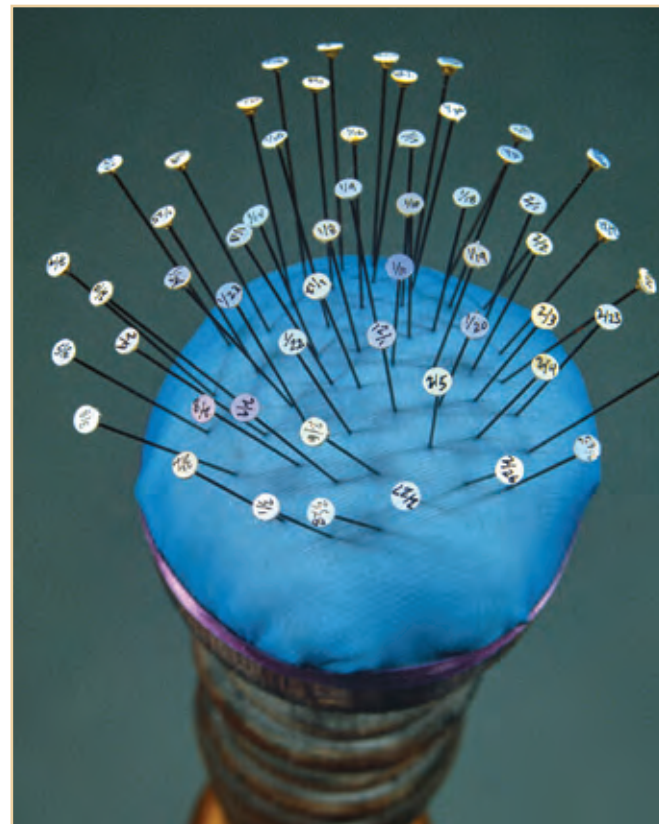
Clock Based on 60 Days of Los Angeles Sky Patch (View to the East), 1993
Acrylic and ink on paper, clock 10" diameter



Sixty Days of Los Angeles Sky Patch (View to the East), 1993
Acrylic on paper matching sky colors each day (distorted by smog), assemblage contraption for viewing sky section, ancillary artworks using sky color data 10' x 10'



Kim Abeles: American Air (1994) was curated by Lucinda Barnes at Allen Memorial Museum, Oberlin College, Oberlin, Ohio. The exhibit included Sky Patch and Smog Translations of art from the collection, including photographs by Margaret Bourke-White and Lois Connor. Historical paintings and prints from the museum collection that feature the sky and atmosphere were exhibited with Abeles' environmental art. This included works by Thomas Cole and Thomas Moran, among others.

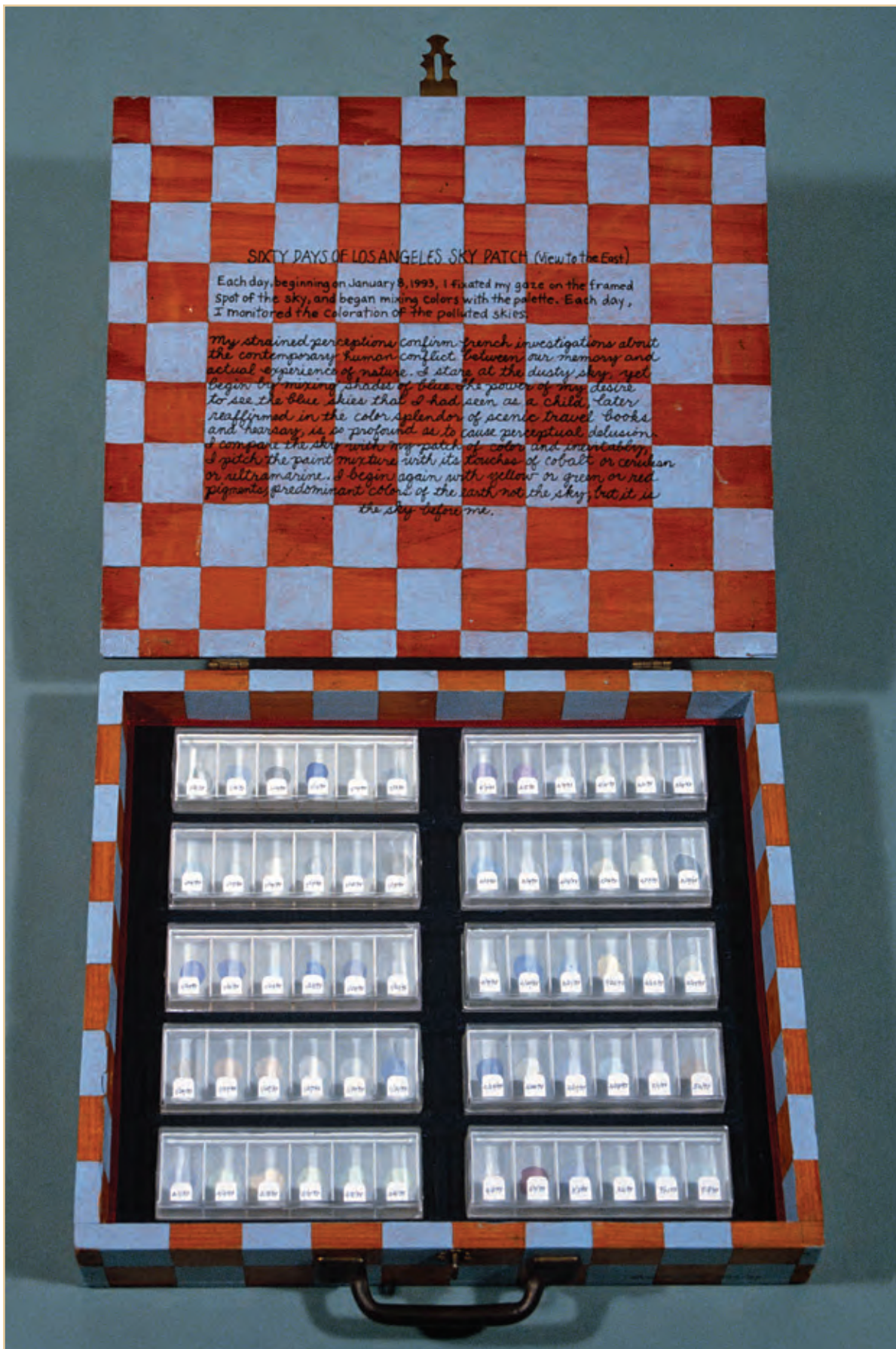


Wallet-size Sky: 60 Days of Los Angeles Sky Patch (View to the East), 1993-95
 Acrylic on paper matching sky colors each day (distorted by smog), wallet, pigment print of sky
 4" x 9"
 Collection of the University of Nebraska



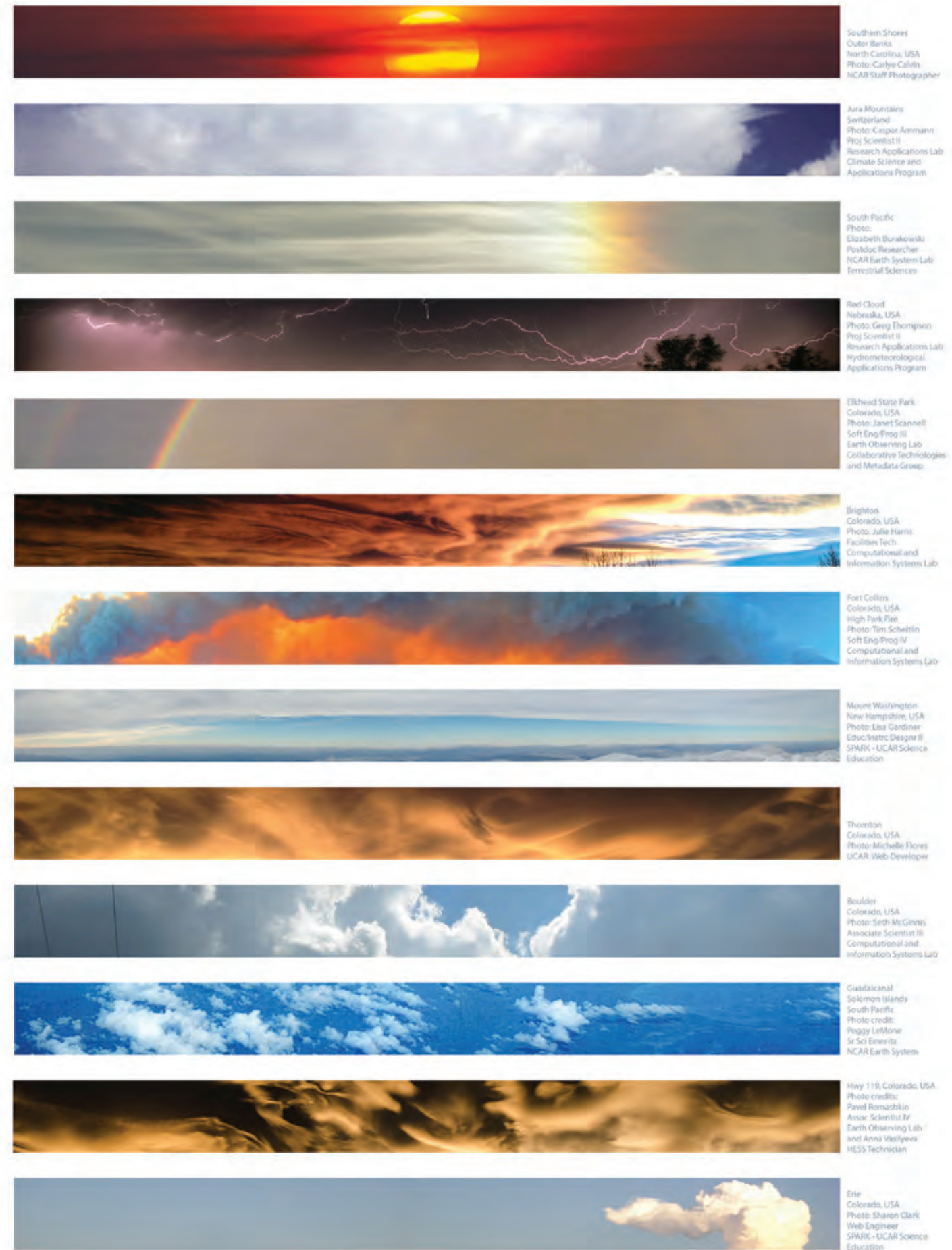
Opposite page:
 Ancillary artworks created with sky data

Installation view at Allen Memorial Museum, Oberlin College
 Shown here, are works featuring the sky and atmosphere by Ed Ruscha, Wanda Lee Hammerbeck, and Abeles' ancillary piece for Sky Patch.



Left:
Dabs o' Sky: 60 Days of Los Angeles Sky Patch (View to the East), 1993-94
 Acrylic paint samples matching sky colors each day (distorted by smog), plastic containers, assemblage
 19" x 11" x 2"

Right:
Shared Skies (NCAR), 2014
 Pigment print
 Editions presented to each participant 22" x 17"
 Shared Skies began in 2014 with a permanent installation of woven, unique skies at the Anderson Munger YMCA in Los Angeles. The atmospheric imagery was requested primarily through social media, and in exchange, each participant received a pigment print with their sky included. Each photographer and location is identified on the prints and composite legends.
 For the NCAR print, the skies were collected from scientists at the National Center for Atmospheric Research in Boulder, Colorado. In this case, Abeles added their job titles in addition to their names and the locations of the skies. This print was made in connection with the interconnectedness of things, Abeles' exhibit produced by EcoArts Connections, Boulder.



Sky Leaves

Bergamot Citrus - 13,000 years old
Orlando, Florida (USA), Carquezaco, Spain, Korea
By artist Kim Abeles

Q-Platanus - 10,000 years old
New York, USA (USA), Serbia, Spain, Italy
By artist Kim Abeles

Cave of Abri - 4,000 years old
Cave of Abri, France (France), Belgium, Italy
By artist Kim Abeles

Redwood Tree - 2,300 years old
Redwood National Park, USA, Italy
By artist Kim Abeles

The Milkmaid - 1,500 years old
England, USA, Canada, Belgium, Italy
By artist Kim Abeles

The Big Banyan Tree - 1,400 years old
Chennai, India (India), France, Italy
By artist Kim Abeles

Landscape Tree - 1,300 years old
Commonwealth, USA, Italy
By artist Kim Abeles

Chacoan Mesquite - 1,100 years old
Chaco Canyon, USA, Italy
By artist Kim Abeles

Pinus - The Tree of Life - 10,000 years old
USA, Italy
By artist Kim Abeles

Tule - 10,000 years old
USA, Italy
By artist Kim Abeles

White Pine - 1,200 years old
USA, Italy
By artist Kim Abeles

African Tree of Life - 1,100 years old
USA, Italy
By artist Kim Abeles

Great Oak - 1,000 years old
USA, Italy
By artist Kim Abeles

Old Yule - 500 years old
USA, Italy
By artist Kim Abeles

Yew - 5,000 years old
USA, Italy
By artist Kim Abeles

Caribbean Baya Tree - 1,200 years old
USA, Italy
By artist Kim Abeles

Big Tree - 1,000 years old
USA, Italy
By artist Kim Abeles

The Gravel - 1,000 years old
USA, Italy
By artist Kim Abeles

California Live Oak - 1,000 years old
USA, Italy
By artist Kim Abeles

King of the Forest - 1,000 years old
USA, Italy
By artist Kim Abeles

King of the Forest - 1,000 years old
USA, Italy
By artist Kim Abeles

La Cumbre de Pinar - 1,000 years old
USA, Italy
By artist Kim Abeles

Great Tree of Life - 1,000 years old
USA, Italy
By artist Kim Abeles

Yule - 1,000 years old
USA, Italy
By artist Kim Abeles

Yule - 1,000 years old
USA, Italy
By artist Kim Abeles

Yule - 1,000 years old
USA, Italy
By artist Kim Abeles

Yule - 1,000 years old
USA, Italy
By artist Kim Abeles

Yule - 1,000 years old
USA, Italy
By artist Kim Abeles

Yule - 1,000 years old
USA, Italy
By artist Kim Abeles

Legend for Sky Leaves, 2015-2022
Dye-sublimation process on
powder-coated aluminum
86" x 38" (Site 1) and 18" x 24" (Site 2)



Sky Leaves, 2015-2022
Dye-sublimation process on
powder-coated aluminum shapes
and the legend
60' x 4'
Sky Leaves is an exterior installation
created through the public art program
of the City of San Gabriel by artist Kim
Abeles. Sky Leaves is installed on a
4-story mixed-use building designed
by LCRA Architecture and Planning.
The artwork represents 32 of the oldest
living trees on earth and photographs
of the skies where they are located.



frugalworld, 2010
Sculptural table, video, handcrafted objects including selections from Mike Knox's collection created by inmates, Artifacts of Solitary Confinement 6' diameter x 30"
Funded in part by a 2010 ARC grant from the Durfee Foundation
The table was one of Abeles' artworks exhibited for *Make:Craft* curated by Patricia Watts, Ben Maltz Gallery, Otis Art Institute, Los Angeles

frugalworld

Humans are most impressive when limitations force them to be creative. All the fear related to trying something new withers in the light of need.

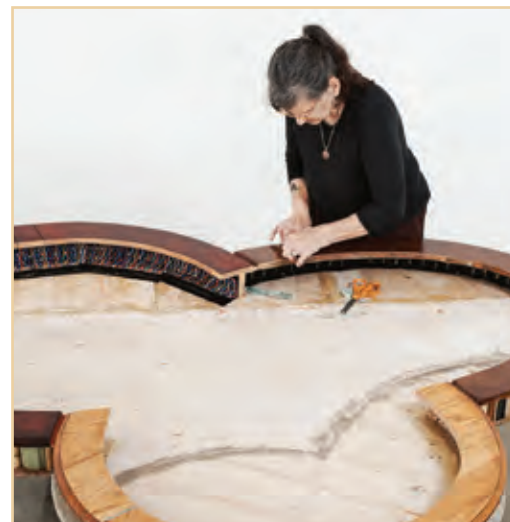
2009

In 2009, I launched the website, *frugalworld.org*, for the exhibition, *An Idea Called Tomorrow*, that was curated by Michele Elizabeth Lee and organized by the California African American Museum and Skirball Museum.

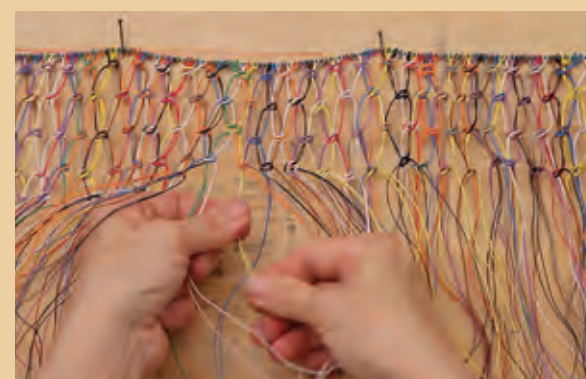
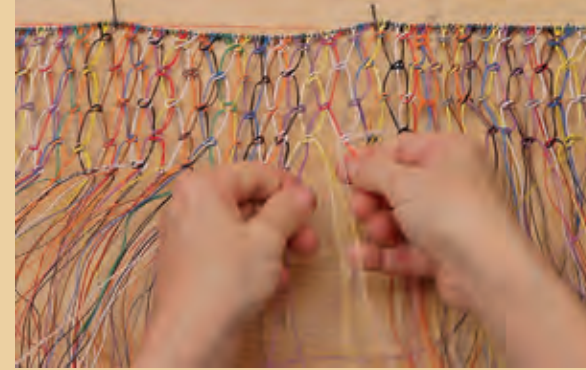
frugalworld addresses practical, innovative and poetic responses to the human dilemma of desire for excess vs the need for practicality. Kitchen-

table and family-remedy advice are innovative solutions necessitated by small incomes. Art created within limitation expresses a desire to create a life acknowledging environmental and global responsibility.

Frugality is ever more important in a time of crisis, during political, social, cultural or economic uncertainty. An investigation of frugality challenges



frugalworld, 2023
Sculptural table constructed as a Venn diagram from three tabletops, handcrafted objects including selections from Mike Knox's collection created by inmates, Artifacts of Solitary Confinement 77" x 77" x 33"



Stills from videos embedded in the *frugalworld* table

preconceptions about individual economics. In our effort toward "green living", isn't the low-income bus rider making a more effective contribution than the owner of any type of car? Resources and consumption are global issues though people respond most often when limitations resonate with a personal effect. This artwork and ideas in *frugalworld* seek to address the details of being frugal, the broader implications, with a balance of practicality and metaphor. The categories of the website express the philosophical underpinning: nothing, thinking something is nothing, something from something, and interaction among humans.

nothing

Nothingness and waiting as existential stories are misplaced notions in the world of poverty and hunger. What is the negotiation between deficiencies born from a world where greed replaced culture?

Within Shingon Buddhism, A-ji meditation, as a symbolization toward the pure mind, seeks to experience reality as the inseparable components, being and emptiness.

And, from Peter Schjeldahl's article, "Conceptual Motion", in the *New Yorker* (August 3, 2009), "If you were a conceptual artist in the late nineteen-sixties and early seventies, it scarcely mattered what you did, as long as it wasn't much, and you documented it. The slighter your enterprise was, the better, to advertise the audacity of a sneakily grand coup in the institutional order of contemporary art."

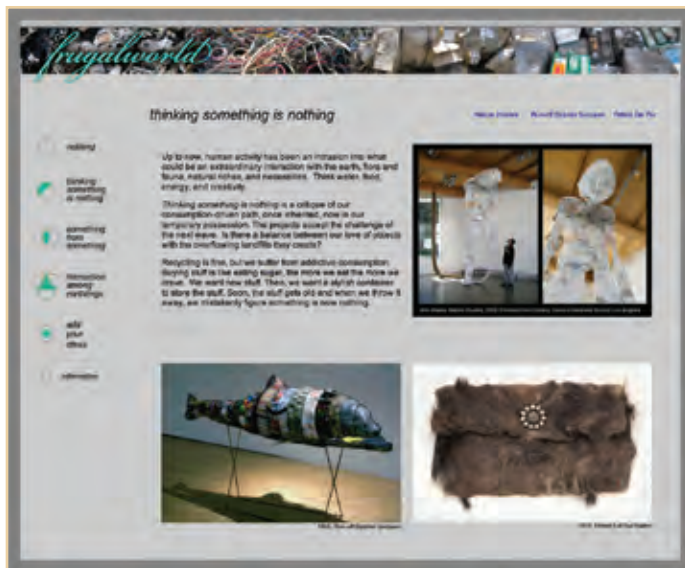
thinking something is nothing

Up to now, human activity has been an intrusion into what could be instead an extraordinary interaction with the earth, flora and fauna, natural riches, and necessities. Think water, food, energy, and creativity.

Thinking something is nothing is a critique of our consumption-driven path, once inherited, now in our temporary possession. The projects accept the challenge of the next wave. Is there a balance between our love of objects with the overflowing landfills they create?

Recycling is not effective, and we suffer from addictive consumption. Buying stuff is like eating sugar, the more we eat the more we crave. We want new stuff. Then, we want a stylish container to store the stuff.

Soon, the stuff gets old and when we throw it away, we mistakenly figure something is now nothing.



something from something

Something from something is easiest to observe in the stories Frances tells. Frances had aunts with names like Sid, Odel, Mazie, Edna, and her mother's name was (naturally), Frances. The first Frances was born in 1899, the second Frances in 1920, and both lived through the depression.

The Great Depression and rationing during both World Wars are examples of larger paradigms about something from something; think silk for parachutes instead of stockings, scrap metal collected for bullet casings, and kids sharing ice off the ice truck. The younger Frances lived with her single mom and all her aunts and cousins. Some of the household liked her dramatic ways and some hated her stunning red hair, but this is the way people survived the times. Neither Frances ever had money, but the mother Frances worked in a sweet shop and at the end of the day wiped chocolate on her apron so she could peel it off for the kids when she got home.

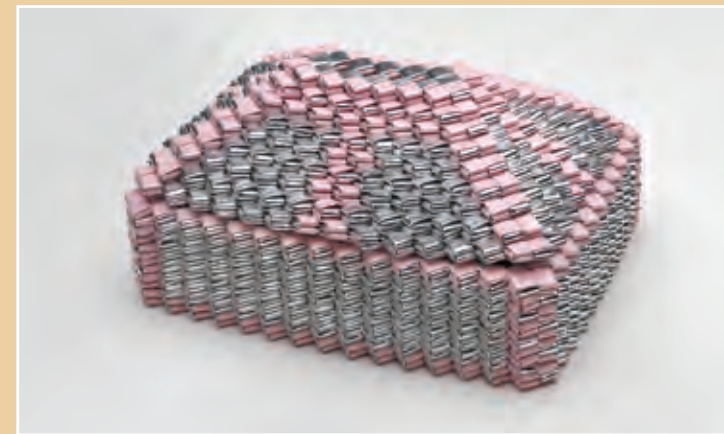
The Artifacts of Solitary Confinement are archetypes of human ingenuity. These are objects (now, artifacts), collected over a three-year period from a guard in solitary confinement in the California penal system, a Los Angeles artist named Mike Knox. The objects clarify the importance of use and value. We can be inspired by the creation of tools and objects created under conditions of extreme limitation. Shown in this section of the website and also the frugalworld sculptural tables is a collection of objects made by incarcerated men (for example, dice made from toilet paper, or a tattoo gun made from a cassette deck motor, BIC pen, and guitar string for the needle).

In Knox's words, "Prisoners who commit crimes in prison are sent to solitary confinement for readjustment. What little property they have is stripped away and restrictions are placed upon them. Inmates spend up to twenty-three hours a day in their cells with minimal human contact. Prison is a culture with its own laws, currency, language, philosophy, art and a need for consumption. Technology is constantly evolving within society but prisoners remain stagnant. Prisoners with nothing still find ways to make possessions and barter for other goods."



In addition to the *frugalworld* sculptural table at the *Make:Craft* exhibition, a computer with the *frugalworld* website was presented on a modified table surfaced with felt and Depression era newspapers. Shown here is the installation view at the Otis Art Institute.

On the adjacent wall, pages from Abeles' 1976 book, *Crafts, Cookery, and Country Living* were displayed. Original pages for the book are in the collection of the Center for Art + Environment, Nevada Art Museum.



Selections from The Artifacts of Solitary Confinement that appear in the *frugalworld* website and sculptural table

- 1) Dice made from hardened toilet paper, bread, sugar, Kool-Aid and tooth powder
- 2) Tattoo gun made from a cassette deck motor, BIC pen, and guitar string for the needle
- 3) Toiletry bag made from threads of bed sheets
- 4) Jewelry box made from potato chip bags

Photos: Ken Marchionno



interaction among earthlings

Humans are most impressive when limitations force them to be creative. All the fear related to trying something new withers in the light of need.

interaction among earthlings relies on input from everyone in their neighborhoods and beyond. frugalworld.org includes projects from creative individuals and groups interested in sharing with the rest of us. The three sections include:

global ideas present creative solutions for solving and contemplating about a large checklist of issues confronting us. Many of these strategies were originated by artists, and live virtually through the web, then manifest in the tangible world.

street smart starts with our neighborhood in downtown and east side of Los Angeles, and will expand to any location where you live. The focus is the best and "frugalest" place to shop and eat in the neighborhood, along with mass transit links and recycling needs. Sorry to contradict the thought process by talking about shopping, but crash dieting in life doesn't work.

home remedies are kitchen-table ideas for feeling better or being better. Nothing listed will make you want to start a lawsuit, but special soups, teas or lettuce baths do impress us.

Stills from video introduction to *interaction among earthlings* section of *frugalworld*



Crafts, Cookery, and Country Living, 1976
 Published by Van Nostrand Reinhold Co., a division of Litton Educational Publishing, Inc. 8.5" x 11"
 Original ink on paper pages are archived at the Center for Art + Environment, Nevada Museum of Art

In 1974, I began compiling a handwritten, illustrated book called *Crafts, Cookery, and Country Living*. As the name implies, it contains a variety of ideas and descriptions of activities ranging from natural dying with plants, herbal teas, weaving and macrame, and homespun recipes. Originally, I thought it would make a personal gift for friends, and two years into it, I couldn't afford the photoprinting. A friend suggested I send it to his publisher, and shortly after, Van Nostrand Reinhold Company began publication. I had created this book using ink pen on typing paper, and with a frugal spirit. This explains the resulting edge to edge content within the book.



Excerpts from the project press release

Harvard-Westlake Students Learn About Environmental Effects of Human Consumption and Waste from Dumpster-Diving Artist, Kim Abeles

LOS ANGELES, March 4, 2009 - Each year, the Harvard-Westlake visual arts department hosts a professional artist's exhibit on its North Hollywood campus. This year, inspired by the school's green initiative, Visual Arts Dept. Chair Cheri Gaulke contacted nationally acclaimed artist Kim Abeles, who has a reputation for exposing environmental issues via her work.

Over a period of five weekdays, Abeles went dumpster diving at Harvard-Westlake's upper school to collect trash without the general knowledge of students, faculty or staff. She then cleaned, ironed and assembled the trash in her studio and transformed it into new artwork.

Abeles also worked with students and teachers at Harvard-Westlake to create art pieces that demonstrate the effects of human waste and consumption on the environment. Students taking video, photography, math, science and journalism courses all participated in some way to the Nature Studies exhibit, which ends on March 6.

One of the pieces of artwork created from the dumpster diving is a 30-foot long human-figure-like sculpture made from just one day of paper collected from the trash. Although the school uses a service that sorts recyclables out of its office and classroom trash, Abeles made a point of collecting the garbage before the trash-collectors did. More than one student discovered drafts of homework assignments comprising the sculpture.

Some of the projects resulting from the dumpster diving were not originally planned. After hauling just a few extremely heavy bags of trash from the dumpsters to her car, Abeles opened up a few, and noticed numerous partially filled water bottles. She started to dump the water -- until a (compact fluorescent) light bulb came on in her head ...

Abeles enlisted the help of Advanced Placement Environmental Science Teacher Tara Kheradyar, who determined that even non-classroom activities should include some "green" work. Kheradyar had students she was monitoring for detention measure and calculate the average amount of un-drunk water thrown out with each bottle. The end result, determined by evaluating five days of water bottles thrown out at school, was that, on average, each water bottle thrown away still contained 40 percent of its original water.

The exhibit was possible through the generous support of Harvard-Westlake Trustee Janis Feldman Horn.

Stills from CareTake, 2009

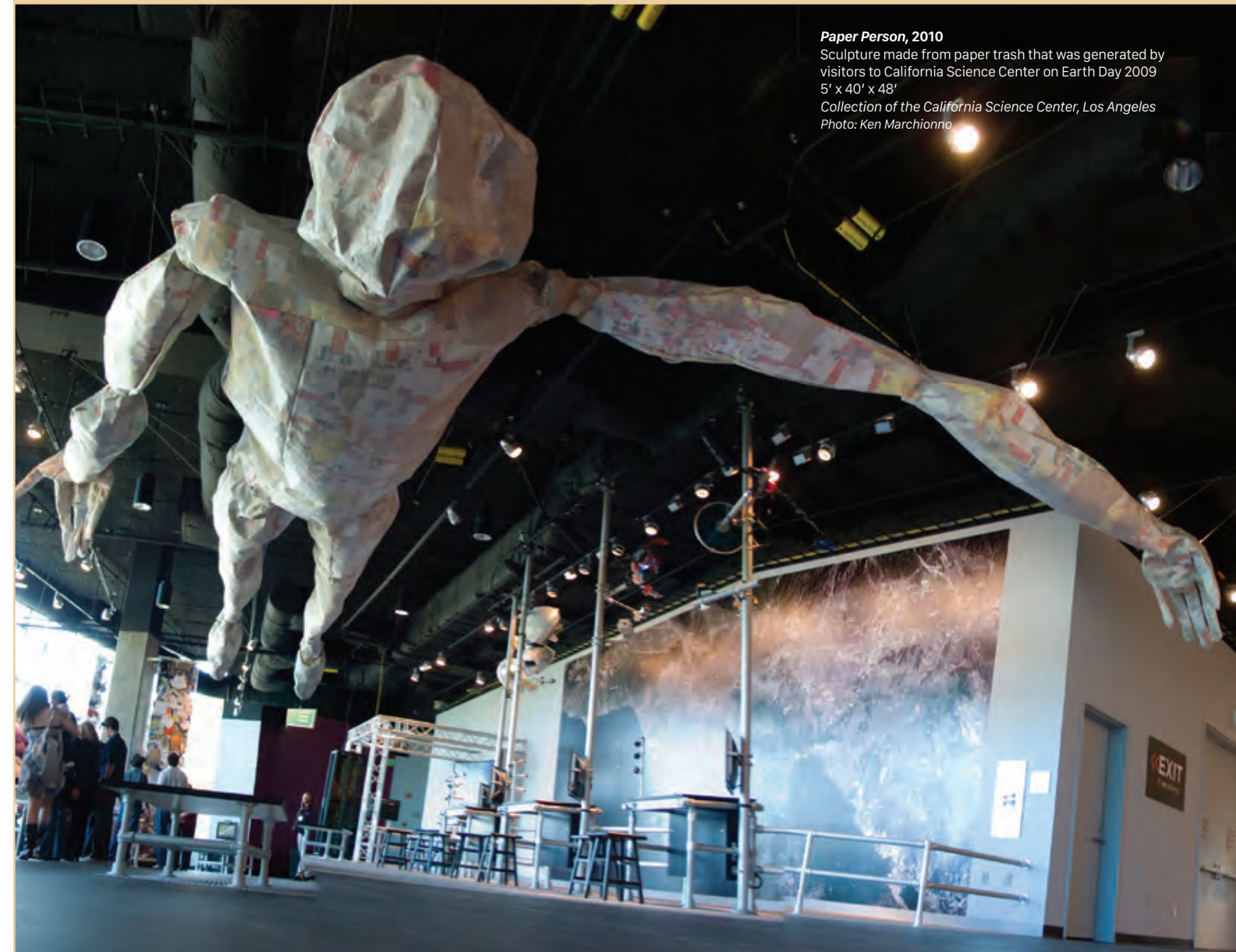
CareTake was produced by Ken Marchionno for Kim Abeles' 2009 *Nature Studies* exhibition at the Harvard Westlake School in Los Angeles. For the exhibition, Abeles made work using the school's trash, gathered over a typical school week. The video runs just over seven minutes and chronicles Abeles' efforts, from dumpster-diving to ironing the washed trash in preparation for producing the work. In video, the artist discusses some of the conceptual underpinnings for the exhibition.



Tears, 2009
Blown glass, plastic water bottle, label



Lost Water, 2009
Henry Mantle, Charlie Weintraub, Julie Barzilay in Ms Kheradyar's Advanced Environmental Earth Science class measured the water remaining in bottles from the recycling bins during a 5-day, school week at Harvard-Westlake. Liam Allman, Andrew Lee and Max Ritvo in Ms Evans' Topics in Calculus and Statistics class calculated the water wasted: 16.123 liters (40% of what was purchased)



Paper Person, 2010
Sculpture made from paper trash that was generated by visitors to California Science Center on Earth Day 2009
5' x 40' x 48'
Collection of the California Science Center, Los Angeles
Photo: Ken Marchionno



Photo: Hagop Najarian



Page 76 and Left:
Paper Person, 2009
Paper Person is a persona created from one day of paper-trash at Harvard-Westlake. The figure's size is based on the amount of paper thrown away in one day (Monday, January 5, 2009). 30' x 4'



Hope Chest, 2013-2021
One month of all the artist's trash reconstructed into a storage chest 13" x 28" x 14"

Every single bit and scrap of trash that I generated in one month has been cut, shredded, pulped, composted, and assembled. The woven elements retain a recognition of the packaging: the almond milk carton is kept together, or the candy wrapper, or the sparkling water bottle. *Hope Chest* is the central element for an installation that includes bags of red wiggler worms offered to viewers to prompt composting at home. The landscape is created using one year of paper bags and has a handwritten excerpt from Samuel Beckett's *Waiting for Godot* the scene when Estragon shrieks, "You and your landscapes! Tell me about the worms!"



Space + Time

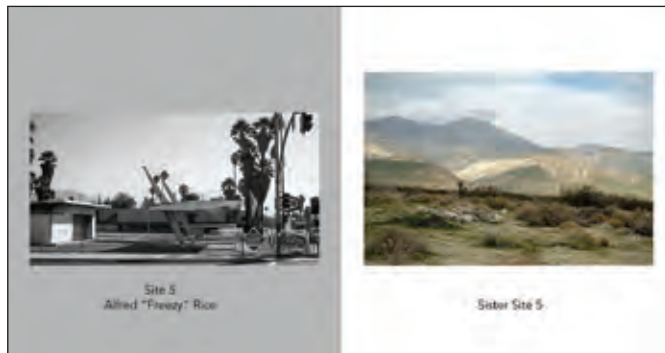
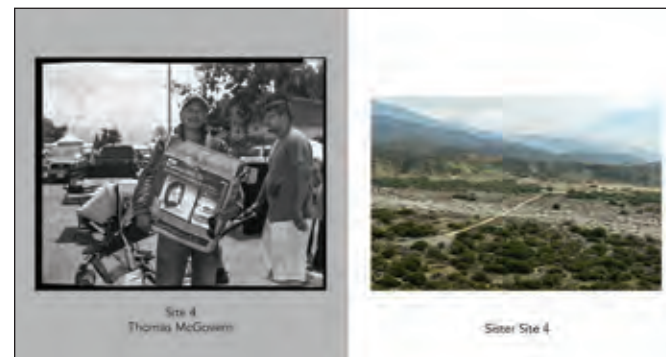
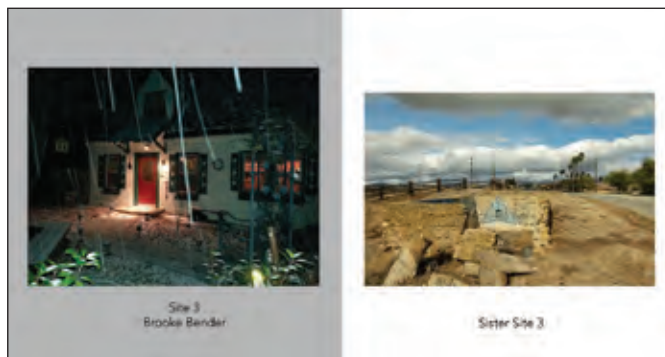
I envisioned concentric circles drawn upon the Los Angeles city map with the La Brea Tar Pits as the center point. (The Tar Pits as a beginning, a center of time and space, a place where the mammoths sink and the surface bubbles.)

1996



The Map is a Legend (Equidistant Inland Empire), 2018
Sculptural table showing the Inland Empire and the San Andreas Fault Line as a painted and incised pigment print map. The tabletop displays framed photos of the area taken by 24 community members. Abeles then located each site and its sister site that is equidistant from the center-point, a spot along the Fault Line. A piece of rock taken from a crevice in the Andreas Fault is placed in the center of the table.
7' diameter x 35"
Photo: Ken Marchionno





Selections from the Sister Sites are shown here. People who provided original photographs, family photos and video for the project:

Cindy Bendat
Brooke Bender
Fred Beshid
Carolyn Campbell
Diane Cockerill
Martin Cox
Jill D'Agneica
Cheryl Dullabaun

Anita Getzler
Liz Gonzalez + Cynthia (Gonzalez) Duran
Suzanne Hackett-Morgan
Sant Khalsa
Lewis Koch
Stephanie Macconaghy
Mary Manusos and
Mel Durand
Ken Marchionno

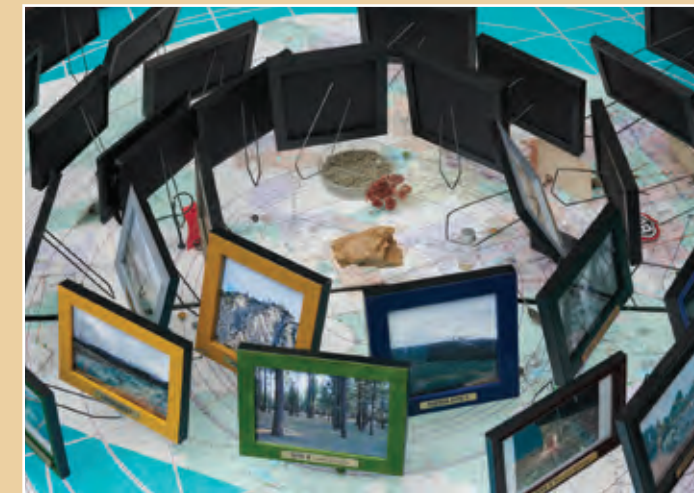
Thomas McGovern
Bob Orso
Alfred "Freezy" Rice
Karen Feuer-Schwager
Stella Stauffer
Meriel Stern
Amy Zapata
Jody Zellen



The Map is a Legend (Equidistant Inland Empire), 2018

I took off in my car with a full tank of gas to find specific sites in the Inland Empire. When I got within the proximity of the San Andreas Fault Line where it intersects Mill Creek Road, I expected to see a sign, maybe literal or geological. I asked a man in a truck parked along the road, and he said, "People come all the time looking for the fault; it's somewhere between here and a road to the south." Like a mirage or the elusive, here, the tangible is just beyond the grasp.

Now Mystic Lake. A complete sentence or a full conjecture is created just by saying that name. Once again, when I started on my search for it in the Inland Empire, maps and GPS only tempted me toward it. Sitting on the side of Gilman Springs Road, looking toward where the lake should be, the endless trail of speeding cars and trucks pushed and pulled the soft field grass and separated me from my sight line. Back at the studio, an aerial view revealed the ghost of Mystic Lake, the echoes of its original perimeter, and a small eye of water at the other end from its tail.



Detail of *The Map is the Legend (Equidistant Inland Empire)*, 2018

Both Mystic Lake and the Andreas Fault Line were among a dozen locations where regional scholars, writers and artists consider the center of the Inland Empire. Other center points, for instance, have philosophical or spiritual cores: UC Riverside and the Riverside Public Library, The Arrowhead in the San Bernardino Mountains, or Poetry Night at Back to the Grind. The center points vary by as much as 30 miles in all directions, and by defining these with concentric circles, the boundary of the Inland Empire is implied, and looks like a Venn diagram.

When I was in search of the San Andreas, I showed a man my map of the Inland Empire, and his first comment was that Adelanto wasn't included. He said, "Adelanto is where you go to die." When I asked if that was a saying (like the Japanese version, "See Nikko and die"), he said that "Apple Valley is where everyone is all happy, and then Victorville is where the mall is, and Adelanto, well, everything is gray."

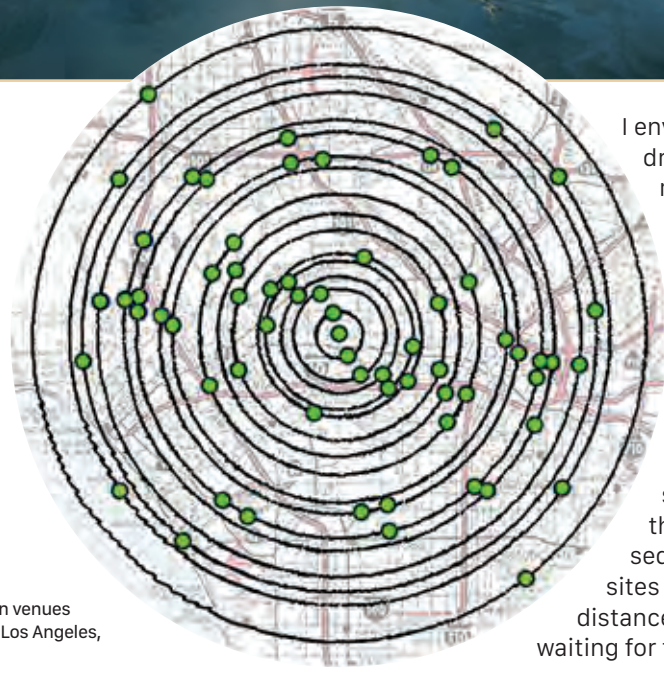
Again back at the studio, Adelanto became an important location, and my personal goal was to make sure it held its place in the map I was creating. Checking online, the Google side bar for the town shows a gray house swallowed by desolation and punctuated by a blue and green trash cans. The city boundary looks like hieroglyph. But looking further, there are many photos of this city's sign:

Welcome City of Adelanto THE CITY WITH UNLIMITED POSSIBILITIES

I have no room in my heart for cynicism though surrounded by it in my profession and politics. Adelanto's city sign represents the hope and dignity that we hold to appreciate life. My journey as a visitor to these locations points to the intangible places that hold memory and yes, possibilities. Held in the framework of a table, photography, and sculptural vessels is the Inland Empire as I would seek it, like trying to grasp in my hand spots floating from my eyes. The Map is a Legend (Equidistant Inland Empire) embraces the hypothetical journey.



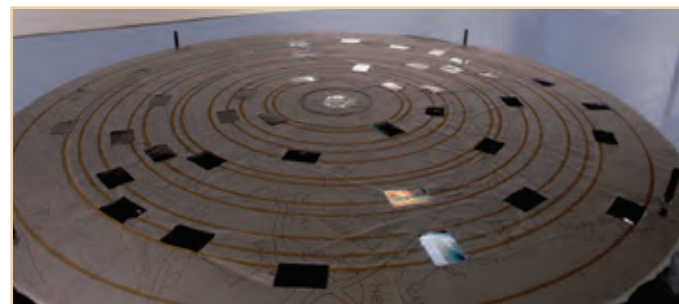
The Map is a Legend (Equidistant Inland Empire) makes a map of the artist's complex relationship with urban living in Los Angeles where she lives and works. The sculptural table is one version of a larger project that uses (in its entirety) concentric mapping, photography, and audio to link "sister sites" across cities; Abeles has created Equidistant projects in Los Angeles, Bangkok, and the version in the Inland Empire, a region east of Los Angeles.



I envisioned concentric circles drawn upon the Los Angeles city map with the La Brea Tar Pits as the center point. (The Tar Pits as a beginning, a center of time and space, a place where the mammoths sink and the surface bubbles.) Each point on each circle has its counterpoint that is equidistant to the center, and each time I photographed both sites. Though I could select the original sites by choice or seduction, each twin, like sister sites or psychic pairs, are linked by distance divined by the system, as if waiting for the other all this time.

Equidistant
Launched March, 1996
Photographs, sound, video, and mapping as an interactive work online.
Created in collaboration with *artcommotion.com*
Executive Producer: Phil van Allen
Producer: Joe Nuccio
Art Director: Molly Bosted
Programmer: Guy Greenbaum
Production Art: Stacey Kam
Videographer: Matt Gainer
The interactive piece was also exhibited in venues including Geffen Contemporary at MOCA Los Angeles, curated by L.A. Freewaves (1996)

The web-based, interactive *Equidistant* was exhibited with an "analog" version that required several people to grip the handles of an 8-foot diameter disk to rotate the map. This medieval-style contraption contained transparencies of the Sister Sites that would illuminate when hovering over a horizontal lightbox glowing beneath. Installation view at the Los Angeles Municipal Arts Gallery (1996).

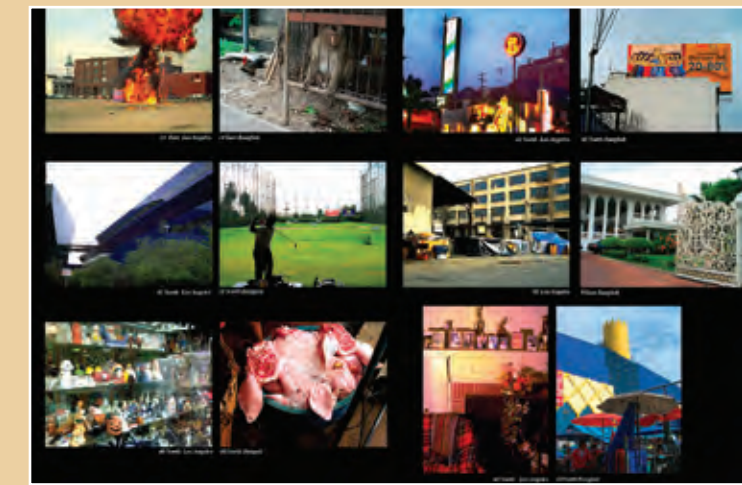


Equidistant Bangkok-Los Angeles, 2002 explores Sister Sites determined by the center points of Los Angeles' La Brea Tar Pits and Bangkok's Emerald Buddha. Abeles took the original map composed of concentric circles and Site locations on the Equidistant created in Los Angeles, and superimposed it onto the map of Bangkok. The chance configuration transported Abeles throughout the region to locations dictated by the mapping. The installation was exhibited in 2002 at Art Centre, Silpakorn University, Bangkok for the Thai-American Cultural Exchange organized by Professor Vichoke Mukdamanee (Silpakorn) and Professor Michael Barton Miller (Cal Poly, San Luis Obispo); and in 2004, *Certain Traces: Dialogue Los Angeles/Prague* curated by Barbara Benish at Sipkarna/Karlin, Prague, Czech Republic.

Detail of Equidistant Bangkok – Los Angeles, 2002
Installation dimensions variable
Sister Sites defined by La Brea Tar Pits in Los Angeles and Emerald Buddha in Bangkok as centers of each city.



Site of Bangkok's Emerald Buddha



Selection of the 27 Sister Site pairs in Los Angeles and Bangkok



Equidistant Los Angeles and Equidistant Bangkok, 1996 and 2002
Interactive computer program created by Abeles in collaboration with *artcommotion.com*
Installation with computer, collaged desk, and artist book of the Sister Site pairs in Los Angeles and Bangkok





Abeles inside her contraption for charting the moon and the sun. She created *Observatory/Territory* during a Fellowship residency at Hand Hollow Foundation, George Rickey Workshop, East Chatham, NY in 1984.



Observatory/Territory, 1984-85
Acrylic on sheer fabric charting the path of the moon and sun, oil paint on wood
Structure dimensions 86" x 29" x 29"
Photo: Janice Felgar



Illuminated Manuscript, 1984
Ink, acrylic and pencil on paper showing celestial paths composite
51" x 79"
Stuart Spence and Judith Vida-Spence Collection



Experiment to Identify Change, 1983
 Camera, plaster mold of hands, transparencies,
 wood, metal, stucco, canvas
 73" x 63" x 52"
 Collection of University of California, Berkeley Art Museum
 and Pacific Film Archive; Gift of Art Resources Transfer, Inc.

Experiment to Identify Change is a sculptural
 photo contraption created to compare changes in
 palm-lines of the hand during a five-month span.



On the One Hand / On the One Hand, 1982
 Wood, metal, stools, pills, paint brushes, fabric (cut from 10-year-old painting
 smock), acrylics on canvas, enamels, "mold" machine to make pills
 74" x 49" x 17"



tōō rāz ə bil' diŋ iz tōō tār it doun
 1983
 Concrete molds of "desk" and stack of paper (duplicating stack in newspaper article referencing the Buder Building's demise), stencilled images on chiffon showing stages of a building demolition, acrylic on canvas and wood
 77" x 39" x 22"



The replication of Mr. Buder's stack of paperwork was cast in concrete and excavated for the sculpture.

tōō rāz ə bil' diŋ iz tōō tār it doun
 is a sculpture about the demolition of the historic Buder Building in St. Louis, Missouri in 1984. Abeles first learned of the proposed demolition through her family. Gustavus A. Buder, Jr., son of G.A. Buder who was responsible for the building, was her Uncle Oscar's brother. Gustavus died the same year that the Buder Building was razed and was born the year it was built, 1903.





Smoke Box, 1983

Smoke drawings on plexiglass, ashes, photo transfers of Los Angeles Library on fabric, photographic transparencies of newspaper articles showing buildings to be torn down, Milan Kundera quote from The Book of Laughter and Forgetting, repurposed wood and metal 74" x 30" x 15"

Collection of Kristin S. Escalante
Photo: Daniel J Martinez

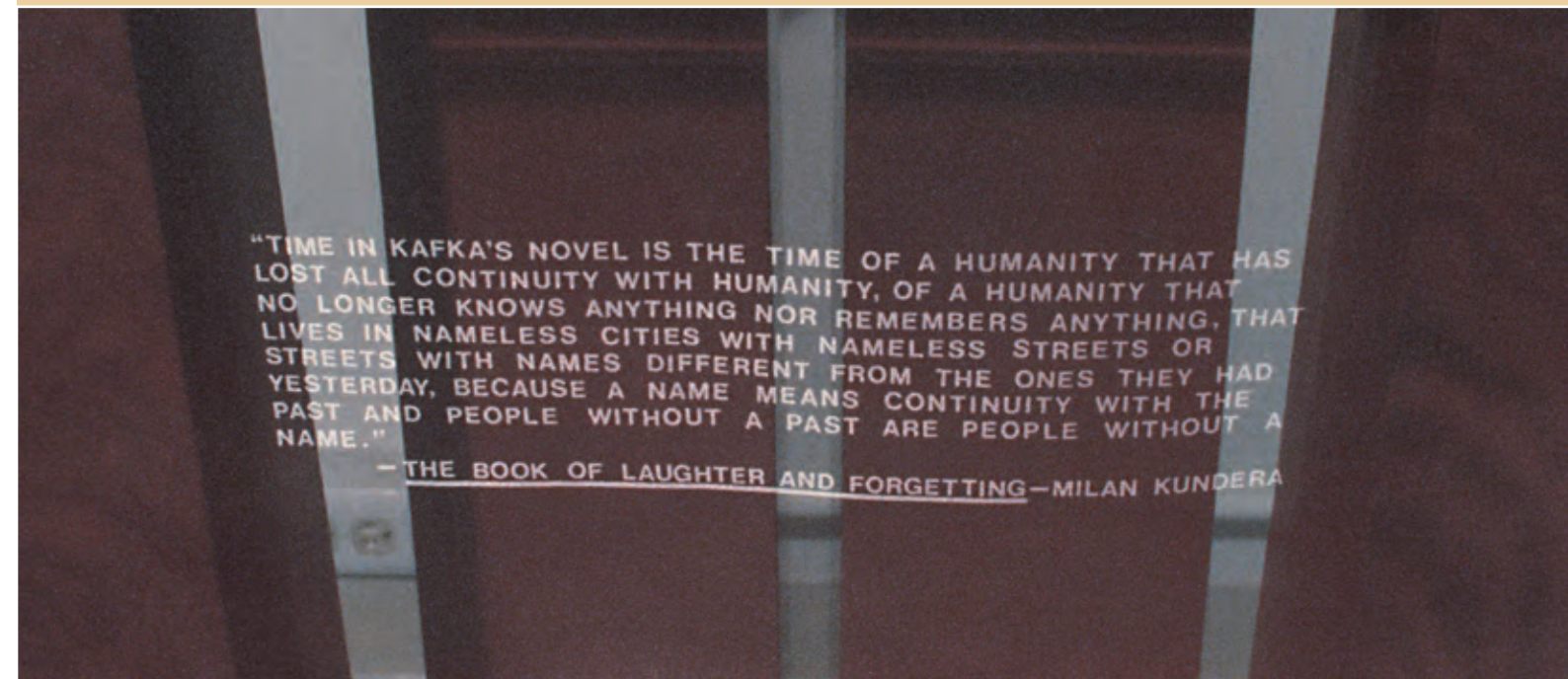
Smoke Box responds to the extensive razing of historical architecture in urban areas throughout the U.S. The common practice of replacing buildings with prefab models and shopping malls severs our necessary connections with the past. This memory loss is similar to the destruction and censorship of books and other artforms or the current collapse of educational institutions.

Smoke box contains photographic transfers on fabric of the goddess-faced marble Sphinxes located at the top of the stairs of the Los Angeles Central Library, guarding the books that



filled its mahogany shelves. The extraordinary downtown library, which first opened to the public in 1926, served as the primary home for my research. Architect, Bertram Grosvenor Goodhue's philosophical understanding of art integrated with architecture inspired a building of great pleasure and beauty. It was a place of natural linkage for past and present because of its historical murals, classical sculpture, elegant fixtures, the grandness of its architecture, and the extensive contents which it housed.

Smoke Box, with its images of a building's demolition created with smoke on the glass surfaces, its pile of ashes, and its succinct quotation by Milan Kundera referencing disconnections with the past, ultimately became a morose omen of the arson fire that destroyed and maimed much of the Central Library in 1987. The Los Angeles Central Library reopened in 1993 after extensive reconstruction and both architectural and artistic development.



Kim Abeles

Biographical Narrative



Photo: Wild Don Lewis

Kim Abeles is an artist whose artworks explore biography, geography, feminism, and the environment. Her work speaks to society, science literacy, and civic engagement, creating projects with science and natural history museums, health departments, air pollution control agencies, National Park Service, and non-profits.

She has been honored as a Guggenheim Fellow and with fellowships from the J. Paul Getty Trust Fund for the Visual Arts, California Community Foundation, and Pollock-Krasner Foundation. Recent projects funded by the National Endowment for the Arts involved a residency at the Institute of Forest Genetics; and *Valises for Camp Ground* in collaboration with Camp 13, a group of female prison inmates who fight wildfires. National Park Service rangers and educators use the creative valises to teach community about wildfire prevention. The project was administered by Los Angeles County Arts and Culture Commission and Armory Center for the Arts, and Abeles was artist-in-residence at Camp 13 for six months.

Since receiving her MFA at University of California Irvine in 1980, her work has been exhibited in 26 countries including large-scale installations in South Korea, Czech Republic, England, Russia, Vietnam, Thailand, China, and Denmark. A major solo exhibition curated by Karen Moss and produced by the Fellows of Contemporary Art, *Kim Abeles: Encyclopedia Persona A-Z: A Fifteen Year Survey*, originated at the Santa Monica Museum of Art in 1993. Following several U.S. venues, the United States Information Agency exhibited the survey at the National Museum of Fine Arts, Santiago, Chile; Museum of Modern Art, Rio de Janeiro, Brazil; Complejo Cultural Recoleta, Buenos Aires, Argentina; and Centro Cultural Consolidado, Caracas, Venezuela.

Solo exhibits of Abeles' art have been presented at numerous college venues including the Kennedy Museum of Art at Ohio University; Laband Gallery at Loyola Marymount University; Frank M. Doyle Arts Pavilion at Orange Coast College; California State University (Fullerton and Sacramento locations), and Allen Memorial Museum at Oberlin College to name a few. Solo shows at alternative spaces have included Art Resources Transfer (A.R.T., Inc), New York; Intersection, San Francisco; and multiple exhibits in the science venues of the National Center for Atmospheric Research in Boulder, and California Science Center in Los Angeles. Her installation work has been shown widely including the Harn Museum of Art in Gainesville; Arizona State University Art Museum in Tempe; Garage Museum of

Contemporary Art in Moscow, Russia; and Kunsthall KAdE in Amersfoort, The Netherlands. She is particularly interested in venues that are accessible to youth and families, and her work has been shown in New York at the Children's Museum of the Arts and the Museum of Arts and Design; and locally at the Natural History Museum of Los Angeles and Los Angeles International Airport. Her artworks have been presented by environmental groups including the Natural Resources Defense Council and the international curators group, ARTPORT_making waves. In 2005, Abeles was the first artist-in-residence at the ArtMill – Center for Creative Sustainability located in Bohemia, Czech Republic.

Kim Abeles has created community-based projects for over three decades. The engagement involves creating long-term projects with organizations such as The Public in West Midlands, England funded through Arts Council England, where she documented the activity of their high street over a four-year period to create 120-foot photograph, *The Golden Mile*. For two years, she collaborated with *A Window Between Worlds*, a non-profit that uses art as a source of healing for families emerging from domestic violence. The resulting workshop and exhibition, *Pearls of Wisdom – End the Violence*, engaged 800 individuals and through the metaphor of valuable pearls formed inside oysters in response to a harmful irritant, participants transformed memories of domestic pain into objects and shared texts. The exhibit premiered at the Korean Cultural Center, Los Angeles and the Pearls continue to be exhibited.

Her projects develop through conversation and observation with groups, schools, and institutions. Topics have ranged from housing to environmental conservation to food justice. During 2015, *gallery-of-solutions* was a collaboration with art students through the Luckman Program, California State University, Los Angeles to develop an exhibit and events about climate change. Public Service videos on mental health by collaborators Kim Abeles and Ken Marchionno were created with students from Dorsey High School. These were commissioned in 2015 by the LA Freeways program, *Out the Window*, funded by the Robert Rauschenberg Foundation.

Her public artworks can be found throughout Los Angeles. *Walk a Mile in My Shoes* – two repurposed traffic medians at Martin Luther King Jr Blvd./Obama Blvd. and Jefferson Blvd./Obama Blvd. – is a mixed media installation based on the shoes of Civil Rights marchers from the collection of Xernona Clayton. The second site highlights Los Angeles'



The Golden Mile installed at The Public, West Bromwich where it was created 2003-2005

The 120-ft photograph is a composite of 1500 images taken over four years and four seasons, and shows the entire high street of West Bromwich in the West Midlands, England. The photograph is periodically presented at the local library on long rows of tables, and visitors bring their families to point out places that hold special memories for them.

activists and leaders. The work was commissioned by City of Los Angeles Department of Cultural Affairs and Department of Public Works in 2014. *Citizen Seeds* are six large-scale sculptures with detailed imagery that speaks to the metaphors of growth, journeys, and mapping of the Park to Playa Trail. This permanent artwork along this trail was funded by the Los Angeles County Arts and Culture and was completed in October 2021.

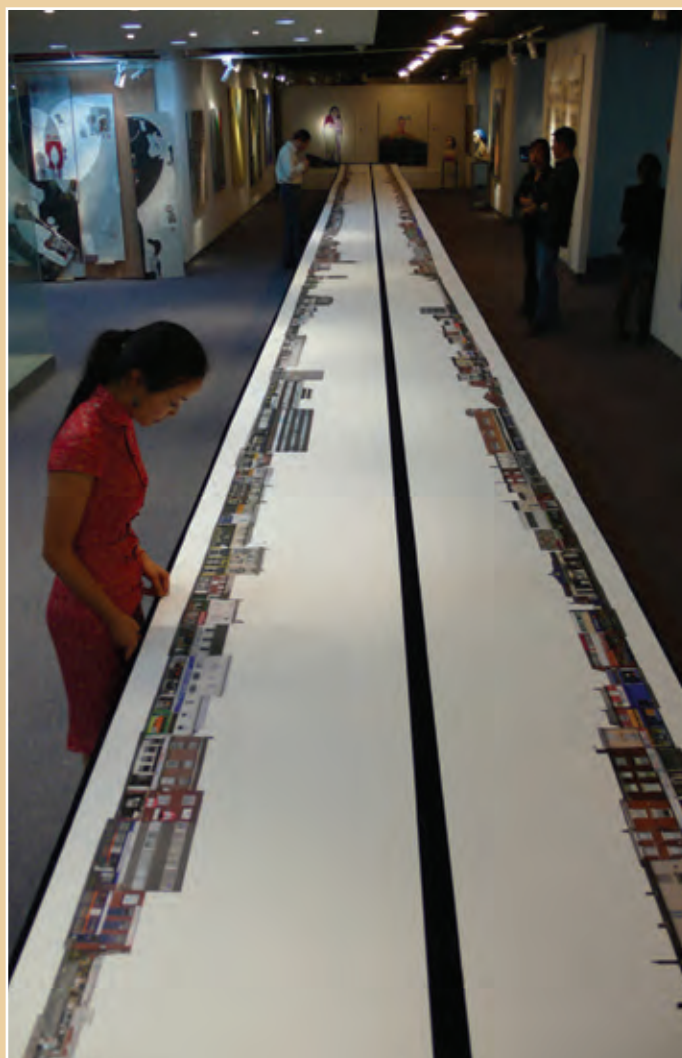
Sky Leaves presents 41 large-scale leaf shapes with photographic imagery and extends 60-feet high. The permanent installation was created through the public art program of the City of San Gabriel by Abeles on a mixed-use building designed by LCRA Architecture and Planning. The leaves at Site 1 represent the oldest living trees currently found on earth and are 1000 - 80,000 years old. Each leaf is surfaced with a photograph of a sky from the region where the tree is located. On Site 2, nine more leaves have imagery that begin with the WMAP view of the universe, travels through time and space, and concludes with the image of the building where the viewer is standing.

Abeles artwork has been discussed and reviewed in numerous periodicals including *New York Times*, *Art News*, *Artillery*, *Scientific American*, *X-TRA*, *Visual Art Source*, *The New Yorker*, *Art in America*, *ARTFORUM*, and *Sculpture*. *On-Site Smog Collector Sculptures*, a project with the California Bureau of Automotive Repair - created to educate the public about emissions testing and rideshare - generated a total media value of close to three million dollars. Her work is included in *Art of Engagement: Political Art in California 1945-Present* by Peter Selz (University of California Press); *Problematics of Site-Surface Tension* edited by Brandon LaBelle, Ken Ehrlich and Stephen Vitiello (Errant Bodies Press); *Contemporary American Artists Interview Twelve Contemporary American Artists* edited by Lucinda Barnes, Miyoshi Barosh, William S. Bartman and Rodney Sappington (A.R.T. Press); *Social Practice: Technologies for Change* edited by xtine burrough and Judith Walgren. (Routledge Press); and *Light and Lens: Photography in the Digital Age* by Robert Hirsch (Focal Press).

Abeles' journals, artist books and process documents are archived at the Center for Art + Environment, Nevada Museum of Art, Reno, Nevada. Her work is included in the following public collections:

- Allen Memorial Art Museum, Oberlin College, Oberlin, OH
- ASU Art Museum, Arizona State University, Tempe, AZ
- Art, Design & Architecture Museum at University of California, Santa Barbara
- Banff Centre for Arts and Creativity's Paul D. Fleck Library Collection, Banff, Alberta, Canada
- Brooklyn Museum, Brooklyn, NY
- California African American Museum, Los Angeles, CA
- California Bureau of Automotive Repair, California Department of Consumer Affairs, Sacramento, CA
- California Science Center, Los Angeles, CA
- Carolyn Campagna Kleefeld Contemporary Art Museum, California State University, Long Beach
- Center for Art + Environment, Nevada Museum of Art, Reno, NV
- The City of Los Angeles' City Art Collection
- City of Santa Monica, CA
- Clarence Ward Art Library Special Collections, Oberlin College, Oberlin, OH
- Cooper-Hewitt, Smithsonian Design Library, New York, NY
- El Pueblo Park Association, Los Angeles, CA
- Fashion Institute of Design and Merchandising, Los Angeles, CA
- Garage Museum of Contemporary Art, Moscow, Russia
- Institute of Contemporary Art San Diego, Encinitas and San Diego, CA
- Laguna Art Museum, Laguna Beach, CA
- Los Angeles County Department of Arts and Culture, Los Angeles, CA
- Los Angeles County Museum of Art (LACMA), Los Angeles, CA
- Los Angeles Metropolitan Transit Authority, Los Angeles, CA
- Museum of Contemporary Art (MOCA), Los Angeles, CA
- Museum of Modern Art Library Collection, New York, NY
- National Geospatial-Intelligence Agency, Springfield, VA
- Natural History Museum, Los Angeles, CA
- Occidental College, Los Angeles, CA
- Orange County Museum of Art, Costa Mesa, CA
- Otis College of Art and Design, Los Angeles, CA
- Palm Springs Art Museum, Palm Springs, CA
- Pomona College Collection. Walter and Elise Mosher Memorial Fund, Pomona, CA
- San José Museum of Art, San Jose, CA
- Sandwell Community History and Archives, Smethwick, West Midlands, UK
- Sheldon Museum of Art, University of Nebraska, Lincoln, NE
- United States Information Agency, U.S. Department of State, Washington, DC
- University of California Berkeley Art Museum and Pacific Film Archive, Berkeley, California
- Utah Museum of Fine Arts, Salt Lake City, UT

For a complete CV, please visit the artist's website at kimabeles.com



The Golden Mile installed at Yucun Art Museum, Suzhou, China in 2009 for Dialogue in Chinese Gardens curated by Holly Wang and presented by Suzhou Cultural and Art Commission Collection of Yucun Art Museum

Acknowledgments

It is my utmost pleasure to write this acknowledgment for the exhibit, *Kim Abeles: Social Furniture (1976-2023)*. Ms. Abeles is an artist of phenomenal vision, addressing such issues as social justice, the environment, and education in her art. Her contributions during the last five decades have been enormous, and this exhibit offers a sampling of her significant accomplishments.

I would like to acknowledge the support of numerous individuals and institutions that have truly made this exhibition possible. A few indispensable institutions in this process are the California African American Art Museum (CAAM), the Natural History Museum, Los Angeles, and the City of Santa Monica's Cultural Affairs. The Gallery, furthermore, owes a special word of thanks to the art collector Kristin Escalante, who shared pieces of her collection for this exhibit, and to Susan Guadamuz,

Isabelle Lutterodt, Naomi Okuyama, and Sofia Klatzker, who proved instrumental in the implementation of the exhibition. Thanks to the art critics Peter Frank and Shana Nys Dambrot, whose insightful and illuminative essays have further enriched the catalog.

The catalog design by Mr. James Scott reflects the beauty of Abeles' works and attests to her genius. Last but not least, this exhibit would not have been possible without the acumen and hard work of the Gallery's student staff, Darren Alvarez, Sierra Moder, Miguel Castro, Claudia Grillon, Karla Navarro, Rudolph Rodriguez, Julian Taylor and Olavo Multini who worked incessantly during the installation.

The Gallery acknowledges the Silverman Family, Jeff and Amelia Silverman, and College of Arts and Letters' Dean Stephen Trzaskoma for supporting this exhibition.

Dr. Mika M. Cho

Director, Ronald H. Silverman Fine Arts Gallery
Professor of Art, Art Department
California State University, Los Angeles

I would like to thank Silverman Fine Arts Gallery Director Mika Cho for her support of my work through the years, and to the student interns who worked in earnest to install the *Social Furniture* survey exhibition. I appreciate the clarity and context for my work that is expressed in the essays written by Shana Nys Dambrot and Peter Frank for this book. I am also grateful to the California African American Museum and their Deputy Director Isabelle Lutterodt for the generous loan of *Documents K-12*. The sculptural table, *The Importance of Objects (The Natural History Museum Collection)*, was restored for the exhibition, and I want to give special thanks to Molly Porter, Director of Education at Natural History Museum of Los Angeles County, and Tim Bovard, Taxidermist at the museum, for their help to borrow specimens and objects for the contents of the table. This table has provided a beautiful continuum of experience and conversation.

Many thanks and kudos to James Scott for his thoughtful design work and tackling this complicated layering of images and text. The book is printed by Typecraft Inc., Pasadena,

CA, a meaningful choice for at least two reasons. Typecraft was the printer for *Kim Abeles: Encyclopedia Persona A-Z, A 15-Year Survey*, a touring exhibition curated by Karen Moss and presented by the Fellows of Contemporary Art (1993-1997). Typecraft also printed the 2021 book for the California State University, Fullerton exhibition curated by Jennifer Frias, *Kim Abeles, Smog Collectors, 1987-2020*. Both of these surveys, and *Social Furniture*, offer me insights for my creative process and why I make art.

My husband Ken Marchionno, daughter Zoë Patiño, son-in-law Juan Patiño, and grandteen Chris Patiño are forever boosting my confidence while understanding the messes of art materials that I make throughout our shared house. My work is conjured and developed by so many people who are willing to share openly with me. This goes for my extraordinary family, people from my past and those who have passed, and strangers every day. Artists of all fields are lucky because of their ability to live stealth and hard through every layer of living.

Kim Abeles

