

# Twilight's last greening

**One component** of artist Basia Irland's contribution to the new exhibit *Mapping a Green Future* at the Center for Contemporary Arts consists of music for cello and a mezzo-soprano singing the names of the chemical pesticides found in the Calaveras River in California. The piece, *Clandestine Calaveras*, plays throughout the Muñoz Waxman Gallery.


"My work [for the exhibit] includes sculptural backpack/repositories containing canteens, logbooks, maps, video documentaries, and photographs from three of my five *Gathering of Water* projects," said Irland, professor emeritus in the department of art and art history at The University of New Mexico, from her studio in Albuquerque. Irland, a sculptor, installation artist, poet, and book artist, is active in water issues and is one of more than a dozen artists taking part in the exhibition.

*Mapping a Green Future* is a multidisciplinary endeavor, the result of a collaboration between CCA, New Energy Economy, and the American Institute of Architects. It is being presented in conjunction with LAND/ART, a continuing series of New Mexico projects dealing with land-based art.

"The origin of the show came by way of a chance meeting with myself and John Fogarty, executive director of New Energy Economy," said Lea Rekow, CCA's executive director and curator of the exhibit, in a recent interview. New Energy Economy works to find business opportunities in the state by developing solutions to climate change. "This exhibition presents itself as a way of mapping a sustainable lifestyle, both at home and in industry, that is far less harmful to ourselves and the Earth. It's not a utopian concept of the future but a display of unencumbered possibilities that should not hold us back from making this a reality. Concerning how we generate energy, we're still living in archaic times with our use of coal and uranium; even 'clean' coal isn't a viable advancement. And we have no effective way of dealing with waste uranium. It all continues to be problematic."

And, indeed, coal is part of the exhibit. In an effort outside Rekow's curatorial activities, area schools and nonprofit organizations have come together to have three and a half tons of coal delivered to the show — roughly the amount of coal used by every American each year — which, according to Rekow, will be divvied up into shopping bags for people to carry to the state Capitol during a "March to the Roundhouse" event scheduled for 1 p.m. on Saturday, Oct. 24, to coincide with International Day of Action on Climate Change.

"The challenges before us — climate change and peak oil — will require us to quickly rethink our energy systems in America," said Fogarty. "It will be a restructuring of our entire society, and will require *all* segments of our society to come together to develop solutions. The arts community will play an important role in lighting the path to a future that is powered by the sun, the wind, and the land." For the exhibit, Fogarty and Rekow have put



Jenny Marketou: *Red Eyed Sky Walkers*, 2008, site-specific installation and networked environment using 100 weather balloons, 10 wireless cameras, and eight flat screens, Star Plaza, Cleveland, Ohio





Claudia Borgna: *Blow Me Away If You Can*, outdoor installation created for the Djerassi Resident Artists Program in Woodside, California

together an interactive video booth that invites people to describe how they receive their electricity, as well as how they would like that energy to be generated in the future.

Along with work by Rekow, Fogarty, and Irland, artists Claudia Borgna, Beatriz da Costa, Bill Gilbert, Catherine Harris, Eve Andrée Laramée, Jenny Marketou, Joan Myers, Jenny Polak, and Brooke Singer, as well as the team of Andrea Polli and Chuck Varga and the Center for Land Use Interpretation (CLUI), have created various pieces that call attention to environmental concerns.

"My work is rich in multimedia elements through video, audio, performance, installations, social interfaces, live broadcasts, Internet, and using ephemeral objects and material, said New York-based Marketou, recently artist in residence at CCA. "I am interested in transforming simple actions like walking, drifting, smelling, watching, and mapping into critiques about social, economic power systems of behaviors and aggression."

For this exhibition Marketou is showing a small version of a large-scale public installation called *Red Eyed Sky Walkers* from 2007. "It's a response to the conditions that reflect our culture, which is completely networked and controlled under the culture of surveillance and systems of information and fear," she said. The piece contains one video projector and two red weather balloons 5 to 6 feet in diameter

inflated with helium, which will be tethered in the gallery. The balloons are equipped with tiny wireless surveillance cameras and digital transmitters with receivers that each day record visual information in real time. This is then projected a wall. Depending on the participation of the spectator, the work "explores how technology can be used to transform and understand our relationship to our environment, the public space and architecture that we inhabit, and the visualization of surveillance data," Marketou said.

Equally as novel as Marketou's weather balloons and Irland's work is *Cloud Car* by Polli and Varga. Equipped with special devices, a vehicle produces vapors that enshroud it, representing visually how our automobile-, oil-, and carbon-based culture affects air quality throughout the world. In addition, da Costa, associate professor of arts at the University of California, Irvine, plans to release a group of homing pigeons fitted with global positioning systems to monitor air pollution in Santa Fe. Borgna — who was born in Germany, raised in Italy, and is currently based in London — tackles the subject of recycling; she will construct an oasis of palm trees made up of plastic shopping bags.

Rekow's concerns in creating this thematic exhibit are shared by many. "The exhibition is a microcosm of other such gatherings and awareness groups elsewhere around the world," she said. Rekow has made arrangements to stream into the gallery live broadcasts

of selective proceedings from the annual Bioneers conference in San Rafael, California, taking place from Friday, Oct. 16, to Sunday, Oct. 18. The Bioneers is an organization of "social and scientific innovators" established in 1990 to explore how nature operates and to better serve the planet and its inhabitants through solutions "inspired by nature and human ingenuity." (For information about the conference, a schedule of events, and prices, see [ccasantafe.org](http://ccasantafe.org).)

"We have an opportunity right now to re-energize our economy by solving global warming, but we need to reach people at a visceral level in order to create the requisite political will," states Fogarty. "And I have been impressed with the Center for Contemporary Arts and the way that they are effectively blending art with social action, particularly with *Mapping a Green Future*, which grew from this pressing need to bring the arts to the climate movement." ◀

## details

- ▼ *Mapping a Green Future*
- ▼ Opening reception 5-7 p.m. Friday, Oct. 9; exhibit through Nov. 21
- ▼ Muñoz Waxman Gallery, Center for Contemporary Arts, 1050 Old Pecos Trail
- ▼ No charge; 982-1338