

Artful Trash Management, RiverCubes, & Cultural Contagion

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Purpose – Action – Ritual

Uncle Flester & His Jester, Laundry Basket Attache

Random reading from Dictionary of Discards

Ritual distribution of Archtypical Flesters

Mascots of a Movement, Colleagues, Being in more than one place at the same time, Living best through each other:

- Inciting a Contagion
- Flesters, Jesters, & Other Serious Matters
- Trash in its proper place? Mainstream culture?? ATM???
- RiverCubes as Urban Watershed Signatures – Breadcrumbs
- ATM & RiverCubes: Diagnose & display cultural dysfunction whimsically
Advance contagious cultural legibility of ecological degradation
Create practical think tank creatively harvesting waste streams
Health of a culture is a reflection of what & how it values
Contagion is inciting

Presentation Projection: Nine Mile Run Flester Documentation

RiverCube HeadShots

On Q Stills

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Humanity haunts the waterways. Alfred North Whitehead

Screening of RiverCubes/Tireless Video

Civic & Community efforts to remove trash from rivers (and elsewhere) offer opportunities for reflection on our more general relations with trash. It is generally assumed that trash has its place -- and that that place is best out of sight... Artful Trash Management (ATM) assumes the reverse: that trash reflects important truths about our culture -- suggesting we become more conscious, deliberate, and refined in our relations with trash. The Tireless Project distinguishes itself from other "River Sweeps" in finding reuse for tires it collects. The question of what to do with other stuff removed from rivers remains... RiverCubes Project: Pittsburgh is a response to that question.

There is something unsatisfactory about investing in the removal of trash -- that finds its place -- for most -- in the out of sight land fill: re-moving trash... While moving trash may be one destiny of our age, we might consider rendering our trash artfully visible where we have no viable re-use for it. We as a culture, American "culture" in particular, have been pursuing a path of production that tends to aggressively trash the earth, its creatures, and "other" cultures. American globalization, the production of products, and the promotion of certain styles of consumption, each proliferate trash in their wakes. Our symptomatic disregard of the material discards our consumer culture produces mirrors the philosophical pretension our culture clings to: that thinking is somehow independent of embodiment. Such make-believe philosophies can be transformed through the power of belief-making strategies. The theory and practice of flesters is one such strategy (see Exhibit A, perhaps a backdrop screening, or accompanying poster session, at this point perhaps the audience would be presented with token flesters, ushering their involvement in the economy of flesters). Flestering embraces the "functions" of discarded things: moving beyond utilitarian meanings toward proliferative and promiscuous senses of use and meaning. Flestering offers intellectual and visceral experience of what is at stake in our perception -- promoting the possibility of transformative ways of seeing being and doing -- employing humor and other means of visceral engagement: fostering ecological and ethological sensibilities... This is why RiverCubes want to remain at their sites of collection in curious condensed forms.

To be sure there are wasteful practices, yet the notion that stuff is waste only reflects our projection of value -- or the lack thereof -- on material that requires more sensitive understanding and treatment during the harvest, production, consumption, and reclamation phases of its "life cycle." Waste is an adjective, verb -- crime against nature -- it is neither noun, nor sustainable practice...

Might we render our cultural dysfunctions in whimsical ways as a means of understanding and transformation in the face of overwhelming ecological degradation? ATM is a practical strategy aimed in this direction. RiverCubes Projects are a catalyst phase of public engagement.

Baruch Spinoza & Wilhelm Reich have identified a distinguishing characteristic of humanity -- in contrast to ascriptions of rationality, language, etc. -- by asking the question: *what is it that makes us desire our own repression?* More than a concern with weakness of will in the face of knowing better, they ask us to concede the power of cultural contagion that degrades ourselves and deforms the earth. And to understand and transform ourselves. Can we render our cultural dysfunctions in whimsical ways as a means of understanding and transformation in the face of overwhelming ecological degradation?? Cathartic cultural contagion may ensue and ameliorate the challenges we face in confronting the impacts we have set in motion.....