

FORWARD

Nature/Humanity, these two factors occupy our lives. An environment in constant flux challenges human reaction. Our attempts to stem change, mine resources and inadvertently cause unbalance greatly affect nature's evolution. Whether we view nature as an idyll to be espoused, a force to be wrestled, or a source of raw material, the impact is evident. Even our ideals can be destructive, such as the western notion of a pristine nature, which each individual hopes to encounter. The result – suburbia. But could the outcome have been different, following the same ideal? Europe is taking a more aggressive stance on integrating cities and townscapes with a natural environment. For instance a finger plan like Copenhagen connects residents directly to both parks and the urban core. Considering different points of view, disciplines, and needs can lead to sites and solutions that succeed on both a social and environmental scale. With the earth in crisis, we need to acknowledge the state we are in and then act. It may not be enough, but doing nothing is not an option. Actions made in good faith may trigger unexpected results, creating more challenges. In the end humanity is still part of the equation, with capacity to destroy, change and restore.

Here we are celebrating the efforts of individual artists who have intervened, mostly to restore or protect damaged environmental sites. Their efforts have not been executed in isolation, but with the involvement of multidisciplinary teams. Their project descriptions read more like master plans, incorporating extensive outreach to the public. Their art is about process, interaction, and realizable visions. With a slight shift in perspective, social and natural environments can be improved. These artists reveal the tragedy, folly and the unexpected gifts and opportunities gleaned from damaged sites. Instead of taking pristine environments (are there any left?), they are creating a new kind of environment, one that pulls nature out of the scars we have inflicted on the earth.

This show was made possible by the ideals, dedication and generosity of all involved. There was always the sense that there was a cause bigger than each of us and that we were just spreading the word. Lillian Ball conceived of and curated the show. Her energy was boundless, helping to bring together a far-flung group. All the artists generously committed to the show. We are grateful for their belief in action, evident in the pieces. Bob Braine, Leslie Reed, Bill Meyer, and Aviva Rahmani expended extra effort to incorporate the grounds of *art sites*' in their pieces. We would especially like to thank Robert J. Kent, Senior Extension Associate with NY Sea Grant of Cornell University Research and Extension Center, who participated on multiple levels, especially the educational and site programs. We would also like to thank the following people, who have provided valuable help and insight: Hideaki Ariizumi, A.I.A., studio a/b architects; Marry Arnold, Teaneck Conservancy; Barbara Branca, NY Sea Grant; Maureen Cullinane, North Fork Audubon; Margery Daughtrey, Cornell University, Plant Pathology; Ronald Feldman Gallery; Carrie Meek Gallagher, Suffolk County Dept. of Environment and Energy; Robert Governale, Excav Services Inc.; Amy Lipton, EcoArtSpace; Chris Pickerell, Habitat Restoration Specialist, Cornell Cooperative Extension; Steven Searl, Peconic Land Trust; Andy Senesac, Ph.D., Weed Science Specialist, Cornell Cooperative Extension; Mark Terry, Senior Environmental Planner; and Amei Wallach, Art Critic. We extend our sincere thanks to all those not mentioned here. We hope that the local community will be encouraged to envision an ecoart project here. On the bigger issues: all of you can help. NOW.

Glynis M. Berry, A.I.A., LEED AP, April 2007

Bio

Smith College, B.A., Yale University, MArch, Tokyo Institute of Technology, Monbusho Fellow. Glynis worked at museums as an exhibit designer and director of a children's museum before becoming an architect and urban designer. Working for NYCDOT, she initiated a pedestrian and traffic calming program for the City and supervised the bicycle program. Currently Glynis is a partner with Hideaki Ariizumi in the firm *studio a/b architects* and is actively involved with the US Green Building Council, advocating green building. Hoping to celebrate creativity and spark thought, she opened *art sites* in Riverhead in 2006. The site was once a Willy's (jeep) dealership located on two acres on the Peconic River. The building had been abandoned for 14 years. The renovation incorporated some green features, such as geothermal climate control and a rainwater cistern.