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Piedmont Project

### Site Specific Environmental Sculpture

I have been contemplating the idea of incorporating an environmentally based sculpture project into my advanced sculpture class for some time. Participating in the Piedmont Project has pointed me in the right direction to begin to implement such a project. I see this project as being grounded in the 'local environment' i.e. using sites on campus. Simultaneously, it is important that we choose places/sites with a deep knowledge of the larger picture. There are two initial steps, walking/mapping the campus and seeking information from such people as the environmental officer, John Wagner and the botanist/biologist Eloise Carter. I realized the potential of site sources on one of the walks with Eloise Carter and John Wagner. When John was pulling the invasive privet-- I immediately saw a sculpture being woven out of the privet and placed in the environment. To raise issues pertinent to an invasive species and a sculptural objects. It's not about randomly 'plopping' a pre-built sculpture in the woods but knowing the larger issues at hand that inform and propel a sculpture/project into existence.

My environmental art research this summer is leading me to artists with varied concerns;

- Nature observation based projects: Andy Goldsworthy, Chris Drury
- Recycling of man's waste products: Mierle Laderman Ukeles, *The Social Mirror*
- Reclamation sites: Mel Chin -*The Revival Field*
- Earthworks: Robert Smithson – *Spiral Jetty 1970*, Walter de Maria's *Lightening Field*
- Nature as medium- Agnes Denes, *Rice/Tree/Burial*,
- Watershed management – Betsy Damon- *Fu-Nan River clean-up* and *The Living Water Garden*; Jackie Brookner, *Prima Lingua*; Helen Mayer Harrison and Newton Harrison, *Breathing Space for the Sava River*; Betty Beaumont, *Ocean Landmark Installation*
- Urban environmental actions- Buster Simpson- *Downspout-Plant Life Monitoring System*
- Narrative environmental landscape (Natural/Cultural history): Alan Sonfist, *Time Landscape: Greenwich Village, New York*; Hans Haacke

As part of the sculpture project I will introduce environmental artists and their projects. The student's will then further research the artists they are interested in and present to the class.

We will make a field trip to the Clemson University collection of site-specific outdoor art at the South Carolina Botanical Garden to experience works by such artists as Chris Drury.

Ecovention, a term coined in 1999 from the words (ecology + invention), is a way of articulating the concerns that I see as important to a sculpture environmental project. The student will be concerned with the idea of process, the multiple steps inherent in creating or 'inventing' a project. The steps include:

- Identify a specific place
- Deep reading of the place chosen
- Drawings/plans/journal
- Material choice/non-destructive use of, natural or recycled
- Temporary structure/event/sculpture

What I realize, through my Piedmont Project experience, is that by creating a dialogue amongst the varied members of the Emory community that I can begin to understand the multiple layers that effect our local environment.