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'Can You Dig It?': A WeHo Exhibition that Uses Art to Address the Environment

Wed, Dec 16, 2015 By Staff 11 Comments



Miki Iwasaki's "Aqueous Skin"

The City of West Hollywood has commissioned works by **Miki Iwasaki** and **Tim Murdoch** for "Can You Dig It?", its upcoming temporary land art exhibition, which was conceived to address the current California drought.

"Can You Dig It?" is part of Art on the Outside, West Hollywood's public art program that installs rotating temporary artworks on medians and in parks. A request for

submissions was issued mid-summer, and the city received applications from 61 artists and artist teams from eight states nationwide. Finalists were reviewed by the Arts and Cultural Affairs Commission in early November. The two works chosen will be installed in Plummer Park early next year.

Artist, designer and architect Miki Iwasaki's "Aqueous Skin" is a suspended canopy composed of recycled and repurposed metal remnants arranged to resemble the surface of water.

Functionally, the artwork provides shade, at the same time that it encourages viewers to make associations with a dynamic range of issues relevant to local and universal ideas about water and the environment. In addition to provoking thought about the drought, Iwasaki's piece references Los Angeles' ongoing affinity for mid-century modern style in its design and detailing, as well as car culture through the use of salvaged automotive parts. Aqueous Skin will be installed in from of the Plummer Park Community Center in late January, 2016.



Tim Murdoch's "And the Tree Was Happy"

The title of Tim Murdoch's "And The Tree Was Happy"—a whimsical vine of colorful, segmented plastic tubes ascending a tree—references Shel Silverstein's book "The Giving Tree." Dr. Seuss's "The Lorax" is also a source of inspiration, another classic in which a serious tale is told in a humorous and approachable way.

Made completely from salvaged materials dramatically in contrast with nature, "And The Tree Was Happy" winds up to the tree's lower branches, culminating in blossom-like water catchers. At the tree's base sits a bulbous knob containing a faucet to access the water. The valve represents an opportunity at redemption, our redemption, says the artist—"We could choose to take the water and use it for ourselves, or we could choose to return the water to the tree." The project will be installed in the center of Plummer Park in late Februar 2016.

Land Art, Earthworks or Earth Art—the inspirations for "Can You Dig It?"—refer to an influential art movement that

emerged in the U.S. in the late 1960s and early 1970s in which landscape and the work of art are seamlessly linked. The artworks frequently exist in the open, left to change and erode under natural

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environmental conditions (Jeffrey Kastner, Land and Environmental Art, survey by Brian Wallis. Phaidon Press. 2010).

Examples of notable land art projects include: Andy Goldsworthy, Woven Branch Arch; Maya Lin, The Wave Field; Nancy Holt, Sun Tunnels; Michael Heizer, Double Negative; Buster Simpson, The Hudson Headwaters Purge; Christo and Jean Claude, Surrounded Islands. A new documentary feature, Troublemakers: The Story of Land Art – A Film By James Crump (2015), explores the movement.

Additional projects are under consideration for "Can You Dig It?" A public reception will be held in the New Year, date to be announced. For more details: <http://www.weho.org/residents/arts-and-culture/visual-arts/art-on-the-outside/can-you-dig-it>

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11 Comments

Larry Block | Wed, Dec 16, 2015 at 12:20 pm
Can we put this much effort and money into solving the homeless issue around town, — we can't just throw money at PATH and say we did our best.. All the best art around the city won't cover up the sights and smells of the homeless on our streets.

Lynn | Wed, Dec 16, 2015 at 4:02 pm
Every year the New York Times does a series on its Neediest Cases. Perhaps we could immediately identify these folks in our town and get help immediately. Last Thursday I met John, a gentleman that lives next to the bus shelter on Fairfax & Willoughby. I inquired of Patrick @ Ok dog on the opposite corner as to his circumstances. I learned of his arduous path after serving his country in Vietnam. It started to rain, and I then observed John had moved into the bus shelter under his pile of yurt-like blankets sitting next to someone waiting for the next bus. It absolutely broke my heart. These folks are visible although we pretend not to see or hear them. Last night the young lady that resides somewhere on or about Crescent Heights / Fountain & Sunset pulled up her sleeping arrangements in a doorway next to the parking garage egress @ the Sunset Shopping Center. I smiled, she faintly waved. At 40 degrees this was not acceptable. Not acceptable ever.

Lynn | Wed, Dec 16, 2015 at 1:05 pm
Mother Nature likes simplicity. In simplicity is beauty. It is up to us to respect that and work in harmony to achieve balance. Everything else seems excessive.

Rudolf Martin | Wed, Dec 16, 2015 at 3:31 pm
Great satire! I almost thought this was real!

luca d | Wed, Dec 16, 2015 at 6:21 pm
the answer is no, i can't and won't 'dig it'.
what a waste of someone's money, probably taxpayers. as for the waste of these 'artist's time, that's their problem.
when the city can't, or won't address real problems that affect people in a serious way, you pander to the 'hug me' crowd and offer this artistic self gratification.
it's pathetic and pointless.
i'm glad this article is presented by wehville unnamed staff, and didn't have to specifically embarrass whoever tore this press release from the transom and posted it online.

Art lover | Thu, Dec 17, 2015 at 3:22 pm

Advertisement for real estate agents Ladd Jackson and Matthew Chavez. Text: LOOKING TO BUY A HOME IN WEST HOLLYWOOD? Search the MLS for FREE! CLICK HERE

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I like these projects and support them. They are a relative bargain at \$12,000 to help bring awareness to the drought. Current:LA is funded at \$20,000 per project which is a lot more obviously and this money isn't the people's taxes anyway. It's from a percent for art fund that developers pay into and there's enough of a reserve that the city is planning on doubling the number of artworks in this program! More art!



luca d | Thu, Dec 17, 2015 at 8:40 pm

does anyone know how many meals could be prepared for the desperately homeless with \$20,000. ?
or perhaps, money for reuniting the homeless with family ?



Lynn | Thu, Dec 17, 2015 at 9:06 pm

How about a "Homeless Fund" that developers should be required to pay into. If we can build affordable housing we can build a multi purpose center to help these folks restart their lives. If it is located in the city center, the previously abandoned Walgreen's project at Santaonica Blvd and Crescent Heights, every eye will be on it.

There are currently third generation homeless folks living on our the streets. We are small enough, financially stable and flexible enough to put solutions to work here and now creating a model for other communities to follow. Isn't that what WeHo is all about? Leadership?



Disco Dan | Thu, Dec 17, 2015 at 9:42 pm

We have a very serious housing crisis. Art needs to take a back seat to more important and pressing issues.



Lynn | Fri, Dec 18, 2015 at 9:01 pm

To get back on subject, perhaps we need folks of the caliber of Noah Purifoy currently exhibited at BCAM. His concepts of activism art would be welcome from a new generation of artists that go far beyond the superficial. They are out there. ARTBOUND continues to present environmentally sensitive artists and their work. It's worth considering.



Art | Tue, Dec 22, 2015 at 3:35 pm

Lynn, I couldn't agree more. The caliber of artists being allowed to put up their art in Weho is very hit or miss. I am so sick of the 'illuminated sculpture' that looks like a Wells Fargo ATM that's in the middle of the street. When they blocked traffic to put those in I swear they said it was only going to be up until July and it's still there now

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WEHO Arts | weho.org/arts | /WeHoArts | @WeHoArts

Concert Schedule:
Ivesh Lal 1/9 | Dorian Nafiseh 1/23
Gardner & Ceredah w/ Brianekirae at Xenos 2/6 | Jack's Cafe 2/20 | Henry Whiting 2/27

PrEP: The Revolution That Didn't Happen

In July 2012, the FDA approved Truvada for the prevention of HIV (PrEP). It was hailed by CDC and many activists as a prevention revolution. CDC recommended that 500,000 gay men take the drug which it recently raised to 1.2 million. Gilead Sciences, the maker of Truvada, has spent millions funding community groups to promote the drug and more money enticing doctors to prescribe it. Thousands of articles have been published about PrEP. Two and a half years later according to CDC only 21,000 people are on the drug in the United States. Any objective observer has to conclude that most patients don't want to take Truvada and doctors are not recommending it.

The failure of PrEP to catch on isn't the biggest problem. The big problem is that CDC has abandoned promoting other prevention methods such as condoms. STD rates which indicate high levels of unprotected sex are soaring across the board and yet budgets for the diagnosis and treatment of STDs are being cut. Funding for HIV testing, outreach and linkage to care are flat or declining.

We know that when people with HIV are treated and their virus is brought down to undetectable levels they are rendered non-infectious to others. Yet, in the United States only about 30% of the HIV infected population have their virus under control - a very bad situation.

AHF has made clear that we believe that PrEP is a good solution for individuals who have multiple partners and never use condoms. However, we do not believe that it is a proven public health solution. How long will it take for CDC to catch on to the failure of this strategy? In the meantime, our country is unprotected against the spread of HIV and other STDs.

AHF.ORG

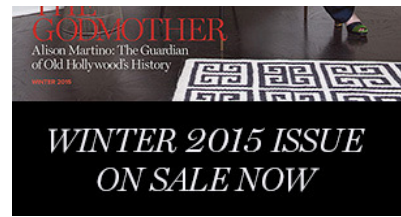
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