

— For Immediate Release

Contact: Anne Wehr
(212) 980-4575
awehr@publicartfund.org

Public Art Fund presents...

Material World

Sculptures by Rachel Foullon, Corin Hewitt,
Matthew Day Jackson, Peter Kreider, and Mamiko Otsubo

At MetroTech Center in Brooklyn

October 26, 2005 – September 10, 2006

Public Art Fund is proud to present a new exhibition of contemporary art at MetroTech Center in Downtown Brooklyn. Material World features new commissions by Matthew Day Jackson, Corin Hewitt, Rachel Foullon, Peter Kreider, and Mamiko Otsubo. The works, which range from personal monuments to visionary landscapes, are each made using materials that directly relate to or are inspired by the artist's chosen subject matter.

Matthew Day Jackson – Staff of Lady Liberty

Matthew Day Jackson's recent sculptures take as their starting point some of history's most legendary artifacts, icons, and figures—the covered wagon, the Alamo, a flagpole, and a Viking boat, to name a few. Interested in how America's past continues to play out in our current political and social landscape, and, more importantly, how it might impact the future, Jackson creates mixed-media works that teem with cultural references. He uses a wide variety of found objects and natural materials to create his sculptures—everything from leather and wood to his own personal t-shirt collection and a broken skateboard—resulting in complex works that seem at once rustic and recent. They suggest historic narratives but also seem to convey stories of their own.

Jackson's sculpture for MetroTech, Staff of Lady Liberty, is an optimistic tribute to the future that begins by recognizing the wisdom and human spirit of important figures of American history. The sculpture is rich in symbolism, celebrating grass roots movements, utopian mysticism, and ancient wisdom about nature. Standing 11 feet tall, the cast bronze staff resembles a tree branch adorned with representations of mythological animals, historic episodes, and portraits of progressive figures such as Eleanor Roosevelt, Abraham Lincoln, Benjamin Franklin, and Sacajawea. Jackson first made the sculpture out of scrap wood and then added on a variety of found objects and store-bought

vintage trinkets: a souvenir totem pole, a coin commemorating the opening of the Lincoln Tunnel bearing its namesake's portrait, a painted ceramic bust, and other objects, each one extracted from history's consumer clutter to form a very loose portrait of American culture.

Corin Hewitt – Legacy

Corin Hewitt's sculptures locate the intersection of the deeply personal and the broadly public, interweaving elements of autobiography, pop culture, and history. He often depicts universally known or at least widely familiar icons, from network weatherman Willard Scott to the 1970s space-age icon Skylab, using them as touchstones and beginning points for a broader examination of individual and collective memory. Hewitt's work for MetroTech, *Legacy*, is a 21-foot-long rainbow made of cast street sweepings that emerges from a planter on MetroTech Commons. The rainbow's seven bands range in tone from brown to gray, and are flecked with color. They are cast from actual debris collected on seven consecutive days by the city's street sweeping machines: dirt, grit, gravel, gum wrappers, bottle caps, socks, plastic combs, and whatever other litter the sweeper picked up during the course of a day. There is a small bronze beard that appears to be crawling out of the hole in the ground where the rainbow emerges.

The rainbow is rich with cultural, mythological, and religious connotations; it has come to suggest multiculturalism, gay pride, and utopianism. With all these possible interpretations, Hewitt notes, the rainbow is as metaphorically ephemeral as the actual natural phenomenon is truly ephemeral. In creating a rainbow out of the city's detritus—the stuff we usually sweep out of the way so we can see what we want to—Hewitt creates a poignant yet ambiguous ode to the city at large. He sees the enigmatic addition of the white beard as signifying our “attempts to find meaning in naturally occurring, transient forms from both the body and from nature.”

Rachel Foullon – Housescape

Rachel Foullon's installation for MetroTech, *Housescape*, is composed of five objects: a blue-and-white two-story beach house, an orange camping tent, a weather-beaten horse trough, a parquet dance floor, and a satellite dish. Each object is built to have its own scale in relationship to reality. Foullon chose to work in a range of materials in order to make each object as realistic as possible, variously using wood, bronze, rubber, Plexiglas, and aluminum.

Housescape is a recreation of Foullon's first sculptural landscapes, created in 1999, for which she crafted the exact same grouping in model scale, using lightweight paper. The objects were spread out on the floor on a paper cutout whose shape loosely resembled that of Big Island of Hawaii. Much of the artist's recent work has been influenced by the volcanic island, which she describes as “inherently sculptural.” This is in part due to its dramatic lava formations, but also because of its rural/suburban sprawl of objects both native and imported from the mainland.

Installed on a grassy area on the MetroTech Commons, *Housescape* suggests a surreal modern-day rural homestead inserted into an urban landscape. With their various scales and materials, the

objects in Housescape each seem to come from a different era and place, or perhaps even from a separate reality. Foullon notes that each object “has a particular time-life built into it” – the trough seems old, as if it is a relic from another time, while the satellite dish looks slick and contemporary. The tent is provisional while the house evokes permanence. The dance floor suggests a one-night party rental, left out after the event is long over. Taken together, the objects prompt a series of perceptual shifts, encouraging the viewer to take a closer look.

Peter Krieder – an upward-down

Peter Kreider's sculptures shift between the ordinary world and a more ambiguous zone of enchantment, where mysterious or abnormal things occur. Many of his works seem to be under the influence of invisible forces. Other works transform familiar objects, often by delightfully simple means, as in an installation of porcelain-cast gallon-milk containers, each poked through with a trio of gaping holes so they resemble ghostly skulls. Kreider's choice of materials exaggerates both the physical presence and strangeness of familiar objects. His works act as unassuming portals, offering another way of seeing what is around us.

For his installation at MetroTech, Kreider explores the properties of one of modern culture's most familiar, utilitarian objects. an upward-down is a colonnade of several unusually tall, identical fire hydrants, designed in the same classically inspired vein as New York City's standard-issue street fixtures. But these hydrants are purely decorative, stripped of all functionality. They have no valves and nozzles, and are rendered in pink cultured marble instead of cast iron. The title, an upward-down, refers to the push-and-pull between above and below ground. Actual hydrants draw water from below, while these overgrown sculptural versions seem to sprout from the ground. They rise up against their prescribed height and function as if, Kreider notes, “by their own will or by some unknown influence.” While mimicking (and falling a bit short of) the grandiosity of traditional Greek and Roman architecture, the colonnade maintains the humility of the urban vernacular.

Mamiko Otsubo - Untitled

Mamiko Otsubo's sculptures, paintings and photographs portray the natural world and landscape through the cultural filters of design and industry. Otsubo takes conventional scenes of nature and represents them in three-dimensions, using image and abstraction as a means of highlighting the disparity between nature and landscape. Her sculptures are lively and efficient: An orange ball on a bright blue modernist table, for example, suffices to suggest a sunset. By utilizing various synthetic materials and fabrication methods, Otsubo evokes what she describes as “a blended image of the picturesque sublime, the view from a drive in my automobile, and nuances of feeling created by modernist designs.”

Otsubo's installation for the lobby of MetroTech One consists of three separate, untitled sculptures, which together transform the corporate space into an abstracted landscape. The largest sculpture is a simplified greenhouse structure built of steel and Plexiglas, and filled with a variety of acrylic greenery. The work is inspired in part by Henri Rousseau's jungle paintings: A round, plastic lamp

hangs low amidst the plants, like a sun in one of his dense landscapes. The second work, a two-part sculpture made of tinted plastic, will sit on both ends of the lobby reception desk where flower arrangements might normally be. Although it is 3-D, the work is meant to suggest a two-dimensional "logo" of a mountain range. For the third work, Otsubo incorporates an existing strip of silver on the inside of the lobby's window as a horizon line for a series of window-box landscapes. The lacquered boxes contain abstract interpretations of undulating landmasses, clouds, and a sun.

Ongoing Exhibitions: Public Art Fund will also continue the exhibition of Tony Matelli's *Stray Dog* (1998) as well as James Angus' *Basketball Dropped from 35,000 feet at Moment of Impact* (1999), and on permanent display are Tom Otterness's *Alligator* (1996) and *Visionary* (1997).

MetroTech Center is located in Downtown Brooklyn between Jay Street and Flatbush Avenue at Myrtle Avenue. Viewing hours are dawn to dusk daily for outdoor works, Monday through Friday 8am to 6pm for Mamiko Otsubo's sculptures in One MetroTech. Subway: A, C, F to Jay Street/Borough Hall, exit at Myrtle Promenade; R to Lawrence Street.

Public Art Fund is New York's leading presenter of artists' projects, new commissions, installations, and exhibitions in public spaces. With twenty-five years of experience and an international reputation, the Public Art Fund identifies, coordinates, and realizes a diversity of major projects by both established and emerging artists throughout New York City. By bringing artworks outside the traditional context of museums and galleries, the Public Art Fund provides a unique platform for an unparalleled public encounter with the art of our time.

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