



# Sketches

## September 2006 Newsletter

### Third Annual Environmental Art Show Comes With New Ideas

Artists' Reception Saturday, September 9 from 5 - 7 p.m.



Karl Anderson's  
"Fish n' Chips"  
2005

The concept of environmental art has now been around long enough for everyone to have some idea of what the term means, and yet as artists take up the idea, they naturally begin to expand it, change it, and create new ideas about it.

In some circles the term environmental art means works of art created in response to a condition or situation in ecology. Artists point out unobserved pollution or misuse of the earth's resources or encourage the viewer to make changes in behavior that will benefit the earth. Each work of art relates to an issue in environmental politics.

In other shows, the word environment relates to the surroundings in which we live that the artist brings inside into the gallery – the great outdoors in a picture or three-dimensional object.

An artist may decide to create a new environment by designing an installation where the viewer is surrounded by element combinations not naturally encountered. It is well known that any environment is instantly changed with the addition of an artwork. It can be as small as a picture on the wall or a huge sculpture in a park.

For some people environmental art is art working with "things" in the environment. This is a tricky concept because every thing we can sense is already part of the environment. The concept can be

narrowed by thinking of using only things naturally found outdoors in nature – trees, grasses, flowers, rocks, and water. Often this is simply called landscape art. Other times artists combine these often-seen elements into new appearances and call that environmental art or a site-specific installation.

Actually we cannot ever get away from the environment with our art. Every surrounding constantly impinges on the artist and everything the artist makes changes the environment.

The theme that Zola de Firmian has chosen for this exhibit, "Nature Working with Artists," offers an opportunity to explore another, and perhaps deeper, meaning of environmental art. The title suggests a new tilt in perspective, perhaps a shift in awareness to consider how nature participates in every aspect of our lives.

Most of the local artists would say that they are here because of the beauty and the inspiring spirit of this area. People who consider themselves as non-artists make the same claim. We are all following the footsteps of the Indians who came here for the same reasons. Thus, the environment of this place is a massive influence on the artists, whether the landscape is their motif or not. Just living among these spaces, in the energy given off by the sea crashing on the cliffs – it all changes people in perceptible ways. The ocean that comes inland as fog and the ever-present winds affects how paint dries, how damp and workable clay remains, and how prints come off the block. Far from the sounds of the city, artists here can listen to trees, walk their eyes over huge rocks, or let their imaginations fly up the pine-covered ridges. When we walk out of our doors, we do not shut down with personal protection, but open ourselves to the majesty and glory of sunlit meadows and tall redwoods.

The exhibit will also be up during the Earth Fair on Saturday, October 7 and continues through October 8.



Ursula Jones's installation "Dew Trap" 2004