

FEEDBACK

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Planet in Peril: Artists Sow Solutions

Eyebeam's *Feedback* presents art + tech responses to earth's predicament

Thursday, March 13 – April 19, 2008

Press preview: Thurs., March 13, 10AM–Noon (RSVP press@eyebeam.org)

Exhibition Opening: March 13, 6–8PM

Eyebeam 540 W. 21st St. (btw 10th and 11th Aves.)

The group exhibition features a series of artist-run workshops and demonstrations

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New York City, February 29, 2008—What does it mean to think “green”? Eyebeam’s expansive new exhibition, ***Feedback***, surveys artists, designers, architects and engineers on the topic of sustainability, and presents their responses—19 projects varying from public art projects and industrial design to DIY energy solutions and software tools—to inspire discussion and action on this pervasive (and increasingly commodified) subject. As the culmination of Eyebeam’s **Beyond Light Bulbs** programming series, the show highlights the concerns, interests and work of Eyebeam’s **Sustainability Research Group**, with work by individuals, collectives, students, local community groups and the Eco-Vis Challenge winners. Free, artist-run workshops are integral to the exhibition’s design and are scheduled Saturdays throughout the show’s duration.

The exhibition’s title, *Feedback*, refers to the self-correcting mechanisms by which systems—in this case, ecological—respond to the influence they exert on their environments. The works on display echo this recursive dynamic, from **Rebecca Bray** and **Britta Riley’s** *DrinkPeeDrinkDrinkPee* sewage processing organ, to **Natalie Jeremijenko’s** tadpole-dispensing prescription from the walk-in *Environmental Health Clinic* for the ecologically unwell. In direct response to the world’s loss of crop biodiversity—as much as 70 percent in the 20th century—**Leah Gauthier’s** *Sow-In* will engage the public, in partnership with local community gardening groups, to sow the seeds of those food plants most in danger of extinction.

Numerous projects in the exhibition address energy consumption, production and harvesting: A visitor enters the exhibition through **Fluxxlab’s** *Revolution Door*, a modified revolving door that harnesses and redistributes human energy. **Mouna Andraos’** *The Power Cart* is a mobile unit that delivers alternative power to people on the street, and **Jeff Feddersen’s** installation *The Off-Grid Outlet* is a solar-powered AC outlet and 12V DC power port destined for the Brooklyn restaurant Café Habana. Building on existing urban infrastructure, **Andrea Polli’s** *Queensbridge Wind Power Project* investigates how clean, renewable wind power might be integrated into the landmark architecture of the Queensboro Bridge.

Visitors to the exhibition will be able to view and ride a prototype of the free, sustainable wooden bicycles that **Rogers Marvel Architects**, together with **West 8** designed as part of their winning entry for the redesign of Governors Island.

A need to track, understand and communicate environmental change is at the heart of **Preemptive Media's** *Area's Immediate Reading* project, a portable, air quality monitoring device for urban individuals and groups to self-identify pollution sources, and a platform to discuss energy politics. **The Living's** *Living City* is a design for an ecology of facades in which individual buildings collect data, share it with others in their social network via wireless transmission, and respond to the collective body of knowledge. **Michael Mandiberg's** *The Real Costs*, a Firefox plug-in that inserts emissions data into travel related e-commerce websites, presents yet another means of using environmental data—on the level of individual consumption.

Recognizing that poorly communicated messages often fall on deaf ears, *Feedback* artists **Eve Mosher** and **Brooke Singer** translate existing information into immediate and digestible forms. Mosher's *HighWaterLine* is a public artwork on NYC's waterfront that demonstrates the impact of climate on NYC residents. Over a period of six months, Mosher drew a blue chalk line marking the 10-feet above sea level line, demarcating the areas most at risk for flooding. **Brooke Singer's** *Superfund365, A Site-A-Day*, is an online data visualization application with an accompanying RSS-feed and email alert system. Each day for a year, beginning September 1, 2007, *Superfund365* profiles one toxic site currently active within the Superfund program run by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency.

Eyebeam's 2007 Eco-Vis Challenge competition asked artists and designers to persuasively package eco-data, within two categories: icons and visualizations. Six winning and finalist projects are showcased in *Feedback*. The winning entry in the Eco-Visualization category was **The Studio for Urban Projects'** *Strange Weather*, a project that considers the semiotics of global environmental change. Relying on Internet news sources, *Strange Weather* graphs the usage patterns of the buzzwords that characterize the dialog around climate change, on the premise that language is critical to how we perceive and address our role within the environment.

The **Green Map® System's** *Green Map® Icons* is a suite of icons designed collaboratively, and spread to more than 50 countries around the globe, for assessing environmental resources currently available to local communities. Version 3 of this iconography received an Honorable Mention in the data visualization category.

Timm Kekeritz's *VirtualWater* and *WaterFootprint* posters, which received an Honorable Mention within the Eco-Vis category, function as illustrated summaries of the virtual water issue, mapping freshwater use against consumption patterns, and across nations. **Annina Rüst's** Eco-Vis submission, which also received an Honorable Mention, addresses consumption and excess quite literally. Her *eRiceCooker* tracks Internet news about genetically modified rice; at each report published online, the cooker dispenses a quarter cup of rice into the pot; at four quarters full, water is added, the rice is cooked, and participants are notified their meal is ready via email.

The art group **Forays** received an Honorable Mention for their *Edible Excess* icon-stickers designating edible waste, and **Oz Etzioni's** *Unrecyclable* was named the winner within the Eco-Icon category, for his icon designating unrecyclable material. Both demonstrate the power of effective imagery in raising environmental awareness.

A series of short video-documentaries by Brooklyn artists' collective **Not An Alternative**, commissioned especially for *Feedback*, documents the making of each of the displayed projects, providing insight into the creative process. These videos will be screened in the main gallery, and will be available for download from Eyebeam's website (for portable .mpeg playing devices), or for viewing on personal PlayStations® available for loan during the exhibition.

The exhibition design is by **Fluxxlab**, and the series of paneled displays enclosing an expanse of vibrant green artificial turf in *Feedback* references an aesthetic of trade shows and science fairs.

The suggestive use of donated, recycled and blatantly artificial grass designates a central commons, posing questions without easy answers: Is artificial turf truly eco-unfriendly?

All 19 projects on display in *Feedback* are designed to enlighten and entertain, challenge and inspire, and ultimately compel viewers to move beyond passive spectatorship. Toward this end, **Fred Beneson's** *Committeecaller.com*, a website application that enables one person to target an entire congressional committee over the phone, will be featured in the exhibition. Three telephones for use with *CommitteeCaller* will be available to exhibition visitors and three local community groups, including **SolarOne** and **Sustainable South Bronx**, will offer agendas and talking points for their use.

Artist-led workshops will offer a unique opportunity to brainstorm with *Feedback* artists and experiment with the methods, tools and strategies on display. The following public programs will take place in conjunction with *Feedback*; all are free and open to the public.

Saturday, March 15

4PM: Time's Up! Bike Lane Liberation Clown Ride After-party

- The clown ride begins at 2:30PM at 73 Morton St. btw. Greenwich St. and Hudson Ave., and will end at Eyebeam at 4PM, where we invite you to join us for a toast to celebrate NYC's new bike lanes. For more info visit <http://times-up.org/index.php?page=bike-lane-liberation>.
- All day: **Natalie Jeremijenko's** *Environmental Health Clinic* will hold walk-in hours.

Saturday, March 29

3PM: Sustainability + Architecture

- **The Living** (architects **David Benjamin** and **Soo-in Yang**) lead a review of projects by graduate students in their Columbia University class, with guest critics including representatives from the US Green Building Council and Rogers Marvel Architecture.
- All day: **Natalie Jeremijenko's** *Environmental Health Clinic* will hold walk-in hours.

Saturday, April 5

3-6PM: Alternative Energy Sources and Use/Reuse Workshops

Advance sign-up required; email bookstore@eyebeam.org

- Eyebeam resident artist **Joo Youn Paek** presents Expand-a-Bag, an inflatable craft workshop.
- Eyebeam alums **Jenny Broutin**, **Carmen Trudell** and **Mouna Andraos** will lead a workshop in which participants create personal power stations using alternative energy sources.

Saturday, April 19

3-6PM: Sustainability Action Day: Toxic Tours and Urban Gardening

- **Natalie Jeremijenko** will present *No Park*.
- **Leah Gauthier** will lead a *Sow-In*, during which participants will distribute hundreds of seed pots to community gardeners across New York City for transplant, care, harvest, and seed saving.
- The **Lower East Side Ecology Center** will demonstrate how the public can repurpose and use waste via worm bins.
- **Brooke Singer** will provide tours through very local sites of contamination (such as Greenpoint, Williamsburg, and Gowanus). Tours will be guided with the assistance of a

private toxicologist who studies the legacy of industrial areas within NYC that are not classified by the EPA but are in some cases more harmful toxic than Superfund sites.

In addition to the above, **Preemptive Media's** AIR devices will be available for check-out on Saturdays during the exhibition. Additionally, *Feedback* artists **Leah Gauthier** and **Diane Ludin** (a contributor to the *Environmental Health Clinic*) will run workshops with invited local school and educators' groups. For the most current information please visit www.eyebeam.org.

Feedback Credits:

Curators: Amanda McDonald Crowley (Executive Director), Liz Slagus (Director of Education and Public Programs), Paul Amitai (Exhibitions and Programming Coordinator), in collaboration with Eyebeam's Sustainability Research Group

Exhibition designers: 2007 Eyebeam Residents and active participants in the Eyebeam Sustainability Research Group, Jenny Broutin and Carmen Trudell of Fluxxlab

Videographer: Commissioned artist and friend of Eyebeam, Jason Jones of Not An Alternative
Artificial Turf donated by **Forever Green**

Project and artist websites:

Andrea Polli, *The Queensbridge Wind Power Project*: <http://www.andreapolli.com/queensbridge>

Annina Rüst, *eRiceCooker*: <http://web.media.mit.edu/~rusti/eRiceCooker>

Brooke Singer, *Superfund365*, <http://www.superfund365.org>

Eve Mosher, *HighWaterLine*, <http://www.highwaterline.org>

Fluxxlab (Jennifer Broutin and Carmen Trudell), *Revolution Door*, <http://www.fluxxlab.com>

Forays (Geraldine Juárez and Adam Bobbette) *Edible Excess*, <http://www.forays.org>

Green Map® System, *Green Map® Icons*, <http://www.greenmap.org>

Leah Gauthier, *Sow-In*, <http://www.leahgauthier.com>

Michael Mandiberg, *The Real Costs*, <http://therealcosts.com>

Mouna Andraos, *The Power Cart*, <http://missmoun.com>

Preemptive Media, *Area's Immediate Reading (AIR)*, <http://www.pm-air.net>

Rebecca Bray and Britta Riley, *DrinkPeeDrinkPeeDrinkPee*, <http://www.submersible.design.com/drinkpee/>

Roger Marvel Architects, <http://www.rogersmarvel.com/GovsIsland.html>

The Living (David Benjamin and Soo-in Yang), *Living City*, <http://www.thelivingnewyork.com/>

The Studio for Urban Projects, *Strange Weather*, <http://www.strangeweatherproject.net>

Timm Kekeritz, *VirtualWater and WaterFootprint*, <http://www.traumkrieger.de/virtualwater/>

Fred Beneson, *Committee Caller*, <http://www.committeecaller.com/>

Natalie Jeremijenko, *The Environmental Health Clinic*,

<http://www.environmentalhealthclinic.net/environmental-health-clinic/>

Sustainable South Bronx, <http://www.ssbx.org/>

SolarOne, <http://solar1.org/>

Not an Alternative, <http://thechangeyouwantosee.org>

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Founded in 1997, **Eyebeam** is an art and technology center that provides a fertile context and state-of-the-art tools for digital experimentation. It is a lively incubator of creativity and thought, where artists and technologists actively engage with the larger culture, addressing the issues and concerns of our time. Eyebeam challenges convention, celebrates the hack, educates the next generation, encourages collaboration, freely offers its output to the community, and invites the public to share in a spirit of *openness*: open source, open content and open distribution.

Eyebeam's current programs are made possible through the generous support of The Atlantic Foundation, The Pacific Foundation, the Johnson Art and Education Foundation, the John D. and Catherine T. MacArthur Foundation, the Jerome Foundation, Dewar's, Deep Green Living, ConEdison, Datagram, Electric Artists Inc.; public funds from New York City Council Speaker Christine C. Quinn, the New York City Department of Cultural Affairs, the National Endowment for the Arts, and the New York State Council on the Arts, a state agency; and many generous individuals. For a complete list of Eyebeam supporters, please visit <http://www.eyebeam.org>.

Location: 540 W. 21st Street between 10th & 11th Avenues

Hours: Tuesday - Saturday, 12:00 - 6:00pm

Bookstore: Tuesday - Saturday, 12:00 - 6:00pm

Admission: All events are free to the public with a suggested donation unless otherwise noted.

