Faculty Development Grantee Report

Grantee's Name: Holly Tenpo
Date: September 27, 2005
Department: Fine Arts

Brief description of your funded project, including activities performed.

I traveled to Portobelo, Panama and created *Chasing Arrows in Las Orquideas*, a site-specific piece in which the international symbol for recycling was stenciled onto coco trees in the rain forest. *Altar of Cycles*, a mixed-media companion piece, was presented at the tourist information office in Portobelo (formerly the home of a Spanish colonist). This work was presented to the public on June 4, 2005 as part of the Ferias de Portobelo del Siglo XXI (the Portobelo Fair of the XXI Century).

What were some of the insights, accomplishments, and/or benefits you derived from the project?

- I created two site-specific artworks that were very favorably received by my colleagues and the public.
- I was mentioned in press coverage related to the event (see attached).
- I was invited back to participate in summer 2006, for the landmark 10-year anniversary of the Taller Portobelo.
- I met some very interesting creative professionals (e.g. writers, filmmakers, visual artists, dancers), some of who have become friends.
- I learned how different it is to live and create work in a communal setting as opposed to by myself in the studio.

What challenges did you experience during the project? What were some of the lessons you learned?

It was challenging to use the jungle as a site for the creation and display of artwork in just two weeks. I had to find ways to work in spite of heavy rainstorms, intense heat, biting insects, and limited access to supplies.

Dissemination: how do you propose to disseminate your project on the faculty development website? (In addition to posting your grantee report, photos, additional narrative, interviews, lectures, publications, etc.)?

- I will post an announcement for my public lecture.
- I will post a link to any other websites that provide information on the project.
- I will post information about Taller Portobelo for Otis students who may be interested in extracurricular travel to Central America in 2006.
The only suggestions would be to make sure that the application due date is not the same day that the committee meets to determine funding. The application and ensuing report should be distributed to faculty online.

Please provide any materials that can be posted online (preferably on a disc) and attach any additional material/pages if necessary

List of attachments:

1. CD w/ digital images of project
2. Statement about work created
3. Press
4. Website information about the Taller Portobelo can be found at www.tallerportobelo.com
Chasing Arrows in Las Orchiedas*

I stenciled the symbol for recycling onto coconut trees in Las Orchiedas. There are 13 stencils in all, one for each acre of land at Las Orchiedas. The sign is formed by three chasing arrows, which cue the viewer to seek the marks as he/she passes through the jungle. The prints will change over time and eventually disappear, signaling the fragile regeneration of this ecosystem.

The arrows also form a triangle, the points of which channel the slave trade’s sugar-rum-human triumvirate. The altar at Centro de Facilidades Turistas** reflects the brutal cycle of the slave trade as a subtext to the larger theme of the complex exchanges and alterations that occur over time in nature and human society.

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*Las Orchiedas is a 13-acre plot of land in the jungle across the bay from Portobelo, Panama. The name of the property derives from the fact that wild orchids grow there. Arturo Lindsay, who with Sandra Eleta, founded Taller Portobelo, owns the property. It is the site each year of the Portobelo Art Fair.

**Centro de Facilidades Turistas is the local tourist office in Portobelo. The site is the former home of a Spanish colonist and dates back some 300 years. The room I used for my installation is the former kitchen and features a very old brick stove. The stove, which has three arches, was incorporated into my altar piece.
Portobelo Project

I was invited by Arturo Lindsay to travel to Portobelo, Panama during the summer of 2005 to create a site-specific project in the jungle. Armed with anti-malarial medication and many ideas, I traveled to the Central American country. Panama is a land of lush jungles, super sized insects and a mestizo culture informed by the descendents of indigenous native peoples, slaves from the Congo, and Spanish colonists. Like my African forbears, I entered the rain forest; and, thus, began my journey.

Chasing Arrows at Las Orchièdas

I stenciled the symbol for recycling onto coconut trees in Las Orchièdas. Las Orchièdas is a 13-acre plot of land in the jungle across the bay from Portobelo, Panama. The name of the property derives from the fact that wild orchids grow there.

There are 13 stencils in all, one for each acre of land at Las Orchièdas. The sign is formed by three chasing arrows, which cue the viewer to seek the marks as he/she passes through the jungle. The prints will change over time and eventually disappear, signaling the fragile regeneration of this ecosystem.

Altar of Cycles

The arrows also form a triangle, the points of which channel the slave trade's sugar-rum-human triumvirate. The altar at Centro de Facilidades Turistías (CEFATI) reflects the brutal cycle of the slave trade as a subtext to the larger theme of the complex exchanges and alterations that occur over time in nature and human society.

CEFATI is the local tourist office in Portobelo. The site is the former home of a Spanish colonist and dates back some 300 years. The room I used for my installation is the former kitchen and features a very old brick stove. The stove, which has three arches, was incorporated into my altar.

The project in Panama culminated with a festival, the Ferias de Portobelo, that included artists from the US and Central America. The event featured the site-specific work as well as a poetry reading, dance performances and a children's play. The artists of Taller Portobelo organized the festival.

Rain Forest Totes

The Rain Forest Totes are an extension of the chasing arrows piece. I took a digital photo of a detail of the work and transferred it onto canvas tote bags. The bags are intended for use when shopping to provide US consumers a way to avoid using plastic bags. They also allow us to offset the guilt that accompanies our privileged existence in style. The bags, which embody "eco-chic," also come in a smaller size for children.
Installation detail (acrylic paint on coconut tree trunk)

Tempo at the "Altar of Cylcles" on festival day.

Rain Forest Totes (ink transfer on canvas)

Altar detail (mixed media with frog)
Altar detail (sugar, glitter, coconut shell)