

Press Release for exhibition
For Immediate Release: January 27, 2003

Euphrat Museum of Art

De Anza College, Cupertino, CA 95014

Art exhibition:

ReThinking Nature

February 20 – April 19, 2003

Closed Spring Break, April 1 - 4

Museum Hours: Tu, W, Th, 10-4; Fri 10-2

Open first Saturday (11-2) and second Tuesday evening (6-8) of the month.

Open to tour groups by appointment.

Reception: Tuesday, March 11, 6-8 pm with artist presentations

Artists include:

Mari Andrews, Irene Chan, Sharon Chinen, Cynthia Handel, Joyce Hsu, Daniel McCormick, and members of California Indian Basketweavers Association, including Ollie Foeside and Tamie Lopez

ReThinking Nature presents art based on nature, made from natural materials, or related to changes in the natural world. Included are sculptures designed to restore damaged creek environments, a sculptural installation of leaves and seeds, a baby basket from willow and spruce root, and kinetic insect-like creatures called Naabees. The exhibition combines appreciation for the beauty and metaphoric qualities of nature with attention to nature activism, such as recreating destroyed habitats and enabling both protection of and access to wilderness areas.

Daniel McCormick works directly in nature, being interested in the restoration of damaged creek environments. McCormick uses native plant materials, creating "woven willow sculptures" that, except for their scale, are reminiscent of Native American basketry. He then places his willow sculptures into creek banks and other damaged areas to help prevent erosion and provide a cleaner habitat for fish. The basket forms collect branches, leaves, and silt which provide a home for new plant growth. Eventually the sculpture disintegrates. "Like many Californians, I grew up around the waterways that populate the state... The habitats that thrived in the streams of my youth are deteriorating. I study the watershed and watershed restoration, consider

riparian materials, the artistic process and design. Sculptural components are constructed of material from the watershed, then placed to work with the eroded stream banks and other damaged areas. The material has only been rearranged. The intent is to give advantage to the riparian system and natural restoration. In time the artist's presence will no longer be felt."

Living in harmony with the natural world is also the basis of an installation of art from the **California Indian Basketweavers Association (CIBA)**. Contemporary artists include **Ollie Foeside** and **Tamie Lopez**. Also there are historic baskets from CIBA's Barbara Ellis Baker collection. The utilitarian artworks, such as burden, storage, or baby baskets, are made from willow, spruce root, maidenhair fern, bear grass, black fern, and more. The installation presents historical forms along with more contemporary interpretations and innovations. Information is provided about the role of CIBA in promoting this art form and in advocating for accessibility to collecting sites and for responsible use of herbicides and pesticides, which endanger basket weavers and all of us who enjoy nature.

While the natural world with all its glorious variations seems unsurpassable visually, **Mari Andrews** draws attention to the human need to order and reorder nature. Andrews creates endless new forms stemming from natural materials, such as leaves, seeds, rocks and twigs, often connected by wire in some geometric or organic web. Her installations cover walls, have an impact from a distance, yet draw the viewer in for the details, the imaginative use of materials, the shapes and textures. Fragile, dangly leaves. Clusters. Movement. Gravity. Steel rods protrude from the wall, weighted down by small stones on their ends — the feeling of stems bent from the weight of rainwater. Some sculptures are beautiful. Others are humorous, such as rose hips connected by wire. While most are in their natural color, occasionally she will cover leaves with pigment for striking formal groupings. Her process is to collaborate with the materials she finds and allow them to suggest a direction.

Sharon Chinen works slowly, carefully building sculptures of the natural world. She uses papier mâché, plaster, wood, wire, paint, and wax, creating forms that evoke "some deeper, undefined emotion and contain the simplicity and elegance inherent in nature." Titles reveal some of the inspiration: *Agave*, *Calla Lilies*, *Flagellum*, *Summer*, *Autumn*. Her concerns are survival, cycles of growth and decay, freedom and constraint between the individual and society, and fostering reverence for the mystery of life. Her work chronicles her present experience which she feels is strongly influenced by growing up close to the land in Hawaii — volcanoes erupting, the harvests, a land alive. "The filters I look through come from coexisting with neighbors of different Eastern cultures who were being assimilated into a Western Culture in a natural environment of unequaled beauty and power."

Cynthia Handel's work is also derived from her interest in organic forms and processes. The earth's cycles, eggs, shells, seedpods, all are nature's containers that

she references in works such as *Seedcase*, *Plenty*, and *Planta*. She explores themes of reproduction, regeneration, and re-birth in *Chamber* and *Mitosis*, two sculptures designed as tables. Repeated forms indicate multiple layers or levels. "The vessel form alludes to a human presence. The body contains water, blood, urine, thoughts, and other substances that contain life." Handel's work is carefully constructed from wood, bronze, iron, and beeswax. Surface treatments are important, each mark recording histories, memories, thoughts, and feelings. "The concept of birth... It is about paring down elements to achieve the essence, the beginning."

A sharp contrast is the technological installation by **Joyce Hsu**. She has created a world of NaaBees, kinetic insect-like creatures that display characteristics such as aggression, curiosity, loyalty, and sociability. Her work explores the human desire for control and companionship. Pets. Electronic pets. Hsu employs a parody of marketing language, particularly that associated with children's toy product lines. She says, "It is a very empowering experience to imagine being able to control all these toys, that presumably will protect you from harm while being willing to become your best companion. The ugliness of our thirst for power is blurred by cuteness." Hsu's work can also be seen as a warning about our vulnerability to digital dependence, and our focus on materialism instead of a natural harmony.

Irene Chan's work expands on the vessel concept seen elsewhere in the exhibition. She considers Taoism, interconnection, boundaries, where a body stops and the environment begins. Environmental elements get absorbed into one's body, for example the smell of garlic, which lingers on the hands after one cooks with it. In her *Vessel* series Chan turns this idea around. Instead of her body as container, she places her body fibers in vessels made of other "skins". Fingernails in a tree leaf vessel. Black hair in copper vessel. White hair in wax paper vessel. Skin in a tree bark vessel. In these unassuming small sculptures, she packs a wallop, elucidating our integral place in the natural world.

On view in April is a related collaborative public artwork organized by Diana Argabrite, Director of the Euphrat Museum's Arts & Schools Program, and involving elementary and middle school students from Cupertino Union and Sunnyvale School Districts.

This exhibition was curated by Jan Rindfleisch in collaboration with Diana Argabrite and assistance from Tina Johnston, Tamie Lopez, and Kathy Wallace.

#####

Call Jan Rindfleisch 408-864-8836 for more information.



April 22, 2003

Euphrat Museum of Art
De Anza College
Cupertino, CA

Press Release

De Anza College Student Art Show

Show dates: May 20 - June 13, 2003..

Museum hours: Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday, 10-4; Friday 10-2.
Open to tour groups by appointment

Reception: Tuesday, June 3, 6-8 pm. Awards will be presented during this reception

Sponsored by the De Anza Associated Student Body, the Euphrat Museum of Art, and the Creative Arts Division, this exhibition features paintings, drawings, mixed-media works, photography, graphic design, sculpture, and ceramics created by students at De Anza College.

The gathering of works reflects expertise in diverse media and varied interests and points of view. A jury of three selected artworks for the exhibition: Susan Hillhouse, Pancho Jimenez, and Linda Walsh. Hillhouse is curator at Triton Museum of Art. Jimenez is a lecturer at Santa Clara University, and Walsh is a professor at San Jose State University.

Special acknowledgement: Chancellor, Foothill-De Anza Community College District, Lois A. Callahan; President, De Anza College, Dr. Martha J. Kanter; Vice President, Instruction, Dr. Judy Miner; Dean, Creative Arts Division, Dr. Nancy Canter; Art and Photography Faculty; Art on Campus Committee

#####

Call Jan Rindfleisch 408-864-8836 for more information.