

February 3, 2006

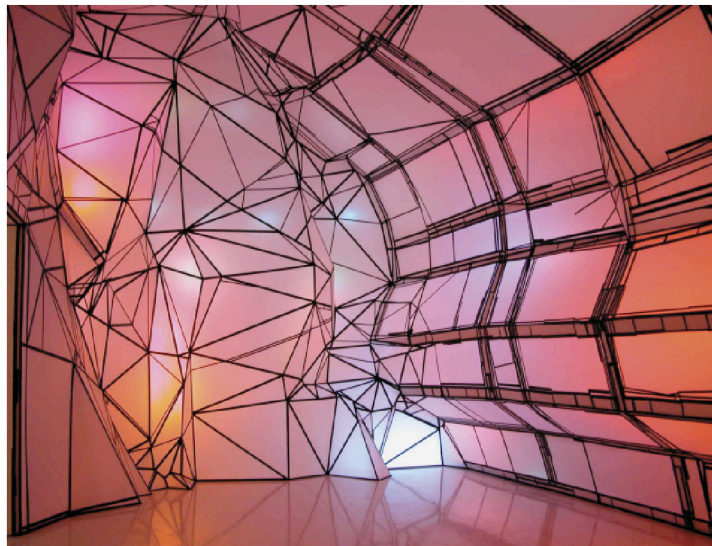
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Please note: The artists are creating site-specific installations for this exhibition; only images of earlier projects by each artist are available for reproduction at this time.

**GAME OF PING-PONG MARKS MEETING OF THE MINDS
BETWEEN TWO ARTISTS AND THEIR ARCHITECTURAL LANDSCAPES**
Ping-Pong Diplomacy on view March 11–May 14, 2006
at Kemper Museum of Contemporary Art

KANSAS CITY, MO—An upcoming exhibition at the Kemper Museum of Contemporary Art takes a closer look at how two emerging artists use low-tech, common materials to create larger-than life sculptural environments that fuse together architecture and landscape and playfully negotiate different aesthetics. *Ping-Pong Diplomacy: Stephen Hendee & Phoebe Washburn*, on view March 11–May 14 at the Kemper Museum, features two major site-specific installations by Stephen Hendee and Phoebe Washburn, and includes a ping-pong table designed in tandem by both artists located at the center of the gallery, where visitors can reflect on the exhibition's duality while playing a game or two. The show opens with a free public reception Saturday, March 11, 5:30–7:30 p.m. For a complete list of educational events, please see pages 3–4.

Taking a historic 1971 table tennis tournament as its point of reference, *Ping-Pong Diplomacy* explores the idea of working out differences through play by bringing together two artists who follow similar rules



Stephen Hendee, *Dead Collider*, 2004; installation view, Smart Museum of Art, University of Chicago; steel, corrugated plastic, tape, fluorescent lights, gels, dimensions variable

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to express divergent styles and concepts. Stephen Hendee, who is based in Las Vegas, uses simple materials like corrugated plastic sheets, photo tape, fluorescent lights, and hot glue to create multi-faceted, glowing, geometric landscapes that summon comparisons to the stage sets of science-fiction films, like the 1982 cult classic *Tron*. While the



Phoebe Washburn, *It Makes For My Billionaire Status*, 2005; installation view, Kantor/Feuer Gallery; mixed media, dimensions variable; Courtesy Kantor/Feuer Gallery, Los Angeles

ambiance is one of virtual reality and cyberspace, Hendee's otherworldly forms shape interiors in a way that is strangely organic—the geometry of his works move and bend in unexpected and spontaneous ways, like rock formations. Additionally, his surfaces are often disrupted by zigzagging lines of black tape that mirror the tangled topography of highways and inspire associations with the unchecked

growth of urban sprawl.

Similarly, Phoebe Washburn, a New York-based artist, also comments on urban sprawl by composing works with post-consumerist materials she discovers and collects from loading docks, alleyways, and dumpsters. Using these seemingly basic materials that reflect a society of excess, Washburn creates intricate, tumbling architectural landscapes fused together in a way that is disjointed, random, and largely improvisational. Considering herself an “anti-builder builder,” Washburn aligns her practice with that of “spontaneous architecture,” a loosely defined type of construction that makes use of whatever materials are at hand (or can be scrounged up) and then put to use in inventive ways. Washburn has cited shantytowns as an inspiration for her inventive, chaotic terrestrial formations, which often include living, growing plants among the debris-strewn topography.

While both Hendee and Washburn rely on basic materials and subtly comment on significant social and geo-political issues, they also bring together two very distinct

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aesthetics. “Hendee and Washburn pursue much different ‘deliveries’—at the most basic level, Hendee’s works are graceful, restrained, seductive, and ethereal, while Washburn’s are clumsy, impulsive, awkward, and terrestrial. Seen together occupying a single space ... their respective works suggest the meeting of heaven and earth,” Kemper Museum curator Elizabeth Dunbar writes in her exhibition essay.

Hendee and Washburn are visiting artists at the Kemper Museum. A brochure, including Dunbar’s essay and a dialogue between the artists, accompanies the exhibition.

FREE EDUCATIONAL EVENTS:

Friday, March 17, noon–1:00 p.m.

Feed Your Mind: Sonic Snapshots—Sound and Image Connections

Join us in the Museum meeting room for a free lunch-hour discussion about sound and image facilitated by University of Missouri-Kansas City music composition graduate students David Olen Baird, Paul Mullen, and UMKC Associate Professor and Coordinator of Composition, Paul Rudy. Together they have created Sonic Snapshots, an educational interactive that provides a platform for discussing the visual components of Hendee and Washburn’s work through sound. Sound types, inspired by each artist’s work, are added together to build a composition from the ground up. Small sounds make larger phrases, and when put together create a small composition.

No musical experience is necessary to attend this presentation, but reservations are required. Participants may enjoy an \$8.00 box lunch from Café Sebastienne during the lecture by reserving one with a credit card. The lunch includes a sandwich, salad, drink, and cookie. Please specify if a vegetarian option is preferred. No outside food or drink is permitted. Contact Kristy Peterson at 816-457-6134 or kristy@kemperart.org.

Friday, March 31, 5:00–7:00 p.m.

Teacher Burnout Buster

Recycle, reuse, and reform. Gather ideas about using “trash” and everyday materials as media for fine art in the classroom while discussing contemporary installation art—specifically the works of Stephen Hendee and Phoebe Washburn. Spend the evening creating context for looking at and discussing Hendee and Washburn’s work, then execute a simple hands-on lesson idea using discarded materials. This workshop is for educators of all levels. Registration is required and space is limited. Contact Kristy Peterson at 816-457-6134 or kristy@kemperart.org.

This workshop is offered in conjunction with a Saturday, April 1, 9:00 a.m.–4:00 p.m. studio component at the Kansas City Art Institute. Please contact the Office of Special Programs at 816-802-3505 to enroll in a workshop taught by Dwight Frizzell, assistant professor of new media and photography. Inspired by Phoebe Washburn’s work, this workshop bridges the fine arts with the performing arts. Frizzell introduces real-time strategies to build group dynamics and engage perceptual and conceptual aspects of the art experience.

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Sunday, April 2, 2:00–4:00 p.m.

Family Event: Fantasy, Fairytales, Forests, and Ping-Pong!

Use your imagination to transport yourself to fantastic spaces while viewing *Ping-Pong Diplomacy: Stephen Hendee & Phoebe Washburn*. Meet a Museum docent at 2:00 p.m. for a guided mini tour of both special exhibitions. Use watercolor paint and paper to create your own woodland paintings and invented fairytale creatures. Watch community intramural players play real ping-pong matches in the *Ping-Pong Diplomacy: Stephen Hendee & Phoebe Washburn* exhibition. Enjoy a Paul Mesner Puppets performance of Aesop's fables from 3:00–3:30 p.m. in the Museum atrium. No reservation is required for this all-ages event. Contact Kristy at 816-457-6134 or kristy@kemperart.org for more information.

Saturday, April 29, 2:00 p.m.

Tour: Meet Me at the Museum

Walk through the exhibition *Ping-Pong Diplomacy: Stephen Hendee & Phoebe Washburn* on your own, then meet on the bleachers in the exhibition at 2:00 p.m. for an informal and lively discussion facilitated by a Kemper Museum docent and/or a game of ping-pong! No reservation is required.

Friday, May 12, 10:00 a.m.–3:00 p.m.

Warped Space—Contemporary Installation Art: Hands-On Workshop

This class is offered through the Osher Lifelong Learning Institute, University of Kansas Continuing Education and explores the ways in which installation art can be multi-media, multi-dimensional, abstract or pictorial, and/or spontaneous. Join DeAnna M. Skedel, Kansas City sculptor and assistant professor in the foundations department at the Kansas City Art Institute, in this day-long studio workshop at the Kemper Museum of Contemporary Art that addresses the art installation. This workshop explores dialogue and interaction between the viewer, the work, and the space in which it is created. Discuss the work of various contemporary installation artists, briefly view installations featured in *Ping-Pong Diplomacy: Stephen Hendee & Phoebe Washburn*, and then explore how interaction with each other as class participants actually creates physical space. Using everyday materials—tape, glue, string, and paper—participants make small versions of what could become a larger construction. This workshop requires no previous art making experience, but participants must have an open mind, creative spirit, and be willing to use scissors, x-acto knives, and rubber cement. Space is limited to 25 participants and lunch is provided (no outside food or drink allowed in the Museum space). A registration and membership fee is required (a \$60.00 membership fee provides unlimited classes during the spring session). Contact the Osher Lifelong Learning Institute toll free at 877-404-5823 (local 785-864-5823) or www.continuinged.ku.edu/lifelonglearning/classes/ to register.

Thank You

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The Kemper Museum acknowledges the generous support of Bank of America for the 2006 Visiting Artists Program. Financial assistance has been provided by the Arvin Gottlieb Charitable Foundation, UMB Bank, n.a., Trustee; the Hallmark Corporate Foundation; the Muriel McBrien Kauffman Foundation; the David Woods Kemper Memorial Foundation; the William T. Kemper Foundation; and Missouri Arts Council, a state agency. Generous in-kind support is provided by *The Kansas City Star*, Midwest Airlines, and The Raphael Hotel.

About the Kemper Museum

Kansas City's acclaimed, free contemporary art museum, the Kemper Museum of Contemporary Art opened in 1994 and draws more than 130,000 visitors each year. The Museum boasts a rapidly growing permanent collection of modern and contemporary works of artists from around the world. The Museum hosts temporary exhibitions, installations, performance work, film and video series, lectures, concerts, children's workshops, and other creative programs designed to both entertain and challenge. For more information, visit www.kemperart.org.

The Kemper Museum of Contemporary Art is open 10:00 a.m.–4:00 p.m., Tuesday–Thursday; 10:00 a.m.–9:00 p.m., Friday–Saturday; and 11:00 a.m.–5:00 p.m., Sunday. The galleries at Kemper East (200 E. 44th Street) are open 10:00 a.m.–4:00 p.m., Tuesday–Thursday. The Museum's popular Café Sebastienne serves lunch 11:00 a.m.–2:30 p.m., Tuesday–Saturday; dinner 5:30–9:30 p.m., Friday–Saturday; and brunch 11:00 a.m.–2:30 p.m., Sunday. The Museum and Café are closed on Mondays.

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