



GALLERY NEWS RELEASE

For Immediate Release

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MILDRED'S LANE RENOVATING WALDEN

September 9 – November 14, 2010

Public Opening Reception: Thursday September 16, 5:30-8pm

Closing Reception & Book Launch: Friday November 12, 6-8pm

Lyceum and Salon open forum lectures/discussions will be held each week

Visit [http://artgallery.tufts.edu/](http://artgallery.tufts.edu) for a full list of events

MEDFORD, MA – The Tufts University Art Gallery presents *Mildred's Lane / Renovating Walden*, an art project and participatory installation spearheaded by noted American **artists J. Morgan Puett and Mark Dion** and guest curator **curatorsquared (Ginger Gregg Duggan and Judith Hoos Fox)** for Tufts University and on view at the Tufts University Art Gallery September 9 through November 14, 2010. A public opening reception will take place on September 16th from 5:30 to 8 pm; guided introductions to the installation and conversational tours will be led by exhibition participants and available to visitors throughout the opening.

Renovating Walden is an extensive, participatory installation that animates the readings and mis-readings of Henry David Thoreau's 1854 book *Walden; or, Life in the Woods*, while "renovating" Thoreau's ideas about the complex and fraught relationship between nature and culture in provocative and interdisciplinary ways. The installation was developed at *Mildred's Lane*, an artists' complex co-founded and directed by artists Puett and Dion. In their community home in northeastern Pennsylvania, Puett and Dion led a group of artists and art students from the School of the Museum of Fine Arts, Boston in emulating Thoreau's philosophy of intentional living.

The session at Mildred's Lane and the culminating installation focus on the fraught relationship between the city and the countryside by investigating how the rural world occupies the projections, fantasies, economy, and antagonism of the cosmopolitan set. The exhibition celebrates and parodies the inherent contradictions in our new attempts at Bohemian life and the history of these attempts. In short, the Mildred's Lane collaborators are "renovating Walden" by applying the pedagogical methodologies and the "workstyles" approach of Mildred's Lane to create a living, breathing, socially charged site at the Tufts University Art Gallery.

Through the deliberate integration of art-making with lifestyle, sustainable living with proximity to nature, and technological amenities with old-fashioned hard work, the hybridized approach of the Mildred's Lane collaborators suffuses every aspect of the *Renovating Walden* installation --from its parlor, where public conversations will take place, to the construction yard, where two "cabins" inspired by Thoreau's house in the woods at Walden Pond will be erected during the course of the exhibition, to the photographer's studio and portrait gallery, where all project collaborators and participants may have a tin type portrait taken and then displayed.

An extensive series of public salon-style conversations and open class sessions is planned in which an array of Tufts faculty from across the School of Arts & Sciences will participate with their students. These open-ended thematic conversations are designed to emulate the 19th century Lyceum, a public educational forum, where the curious public is invited to converse about the relevance of Thoreau's ideas today. A few examples include: "What does Thoreau teach us about sustainability?," a lecture/conversation led by **Gilbert Metcalf** of the Department of Economics; "Out in front (a little to the left)," excerpts from a performance-in-progress by the Tufts Dance Ensemble, under the direction of **Daniel McCusker**; and a keynote lecture by **Radiclani Clytus**, Department of English and American Studies Program, entitled "Drawing Rooms and Disturbed Consciences: Parlor Politics on the Anti-Slavery Home Front," to be held on Friday, October 22, from 11 am to 12 noon.

Visitors are encouraged to return to the Gallery throughout the course of the exhibition to view its physical transformations and participate in the varied and numerous public conversations and lectures. On **Friday, November 12, from 6 to 8 pm**, the Gallery will host a public closing reception to launch the exhibition catalogue, which documents the session at Mildred's Lane, the installation at the Tufts University Art Gallery, and includes contributions from artists J. Morgan Puett and Mark Dion, curatorsquared, David F. Wood, curator of the Concord Museum, Rebecca Kneale Gould, associate professor of religion and environmental studies at Middlebury College, and project collaborators from Tufts and the School of the Museum of Fine Arts. The publication has been supported in part by the Elizabeth Firestone Graham Foundation and individual donors.

PUBLIC EVENTS

Opening Reception:

Thursday, September 16, 5:30 to 8pm

Closing Reception and Book Launch:

Friday, November 12, 6 to 8pm

Keynote Lecture: "Drawing Rooms and Disturbed Consciences: Parlor Politics on the Anti-Slavery Home Front"

Radiclani Clytus

Friday, October 22, 11am to 12noon

Exhibition Tours with a Mildred's Lane Fellow:

Saturday, October 2, 2 to 3pm

Saturday, November 13, 2 to 3pm

Lycea: (Early evening open forum lecture/discussions)

"Simplicity, simplicity,...Complexity?" Jonathan Kenny, Department of Chemistry

Thursday, September 30, 7 to 8:30pm

"Architecture and Thoreau's House at Walden Pond" Danny Abramson, Department of Art & Art History; David Wood, Curator, Concord Museum; and Becky Hutchinson, Architect

Thursday, October 14, 6 to 8pm

"The philosophical significance of Thoreau's *Walden*" Avner Baz, Department of Philosophy

Thursday, October 28, 6 to 8pm

Salons: (Lunch hour open forum lecture/discussions):

"Artists as Researchers" Monica McTighe, Department of Art and Art History

Tuesday, September 21, 12:10 to 1:20pm

"What does Thoreau teach us about sustainability?" Gilbert Metcalf, Department of Economics

Tuesday, October 5, 12:10 to 1:20pm

"Out in front (a little to the left)" The Tufts Dance Ensemble, under the direction of Daniel McCusker

Tuesday, November 2, 12:10 to 1:20pm

Visit our website at <http://artgallery.tufts.edu> for more information

The Tufts University Art Gallery animates the intellectual life of the greater university community through exhibitions and programs exploring new, global perspectives on art and on art discourse. The Gallery is fully accessible and admission is free (\$3 suggested donation). Gallery hours are Tuesday through Sunday, 11:00am to 5:00pm & Thursdays until 8:00pm. Free event parking is available in the lot behind the Aidekman Arts Center, off Lower Campus Road. During regular visitor hours, there are four free Gallery visitor parking spots in the gallery parking lot.

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