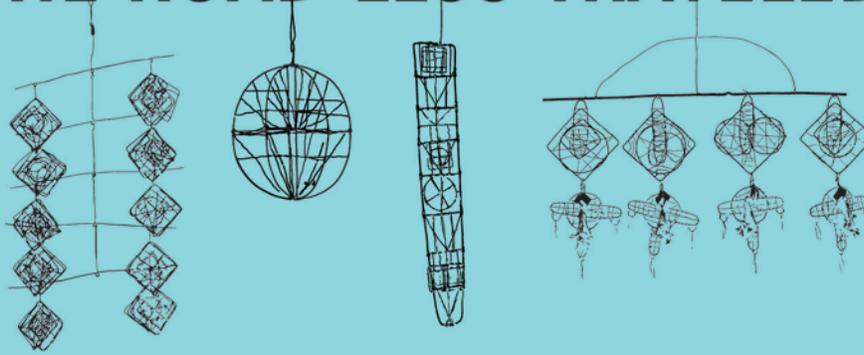


THE ROAD LESS TRAVELED



Sheboygan, WI September 27-29, 2017

FUELING STATION

Creative Practice Powered by Artist-Built Environments

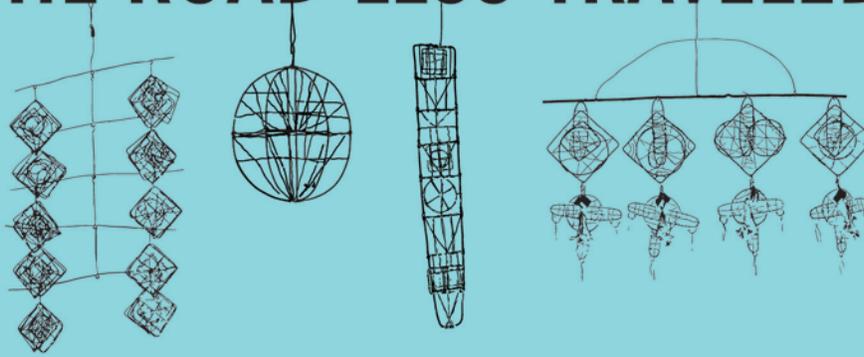
Penny Duff

Emergent Ways of Being within Living Landscapes

In a 2009 interview for *The Believer*, Rebecca Solnit stated: “I still think the revolution is to make the world safe for poetry, meandering, for the frail and vulnerable, the rare and obscure, the impractical and local and small, and I feel that we’ve lost if we don’t practice and celebrate them now, instead of waiting for some ’60s never-never land of after-the-revolution.” Tracing a lineage of influences from family mythologies of life in rural Missouri to Sun Ra, Alice Waters, Black Mountain College, Fritz, Haeg, The Kitchen, and the founding era of Marfa Public Radio, I plan to unpack ideas of thinking through space in order to bring this revolution into being within living landscapes. What imprint do these creative practices and sites leave on the collective conscious and how can the ethos they evoke provide road maps to emergent ways of being?

These are among the many complex questions I’m trying to explore within my own amorphous practice as I adapt to a radically different context in rural Southwest Michigan. As a lifelong urban dweller now living in a civil township of 1,200, I am immersed in a slow process of experimenting with ways of imbuing this new landscape, community, and daily life with the inspiration and knowledge I’ve gleaned from the life’s work of these thinkers, makers, artists, and farmers. To date, this takes nascent shape as a weekly free-form radio show broadcasting from my local low-power FM station called *Vernacular Media* and The Storehouse, a multi-disciplinary arts space run by my husband and me in our home. In the future, I am dreaming of a radical reimagining of our shuttered public school system and beyond as I explore the possibilities of living among the rambling countryside in our imperfect present.

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Alex Gartelmann

My interest in emotional site specificity and localized vernacular building styles has led my practice to be deeply tied to environment builders and the self-taught. Much of my life prior to art school was unconsciously based around working in these ways, growing up in a fairly rural place with little to do. Things I wanted to be involved in, skateboarding, art, punk, seemed so distant that my options for engagement were to build those spaces for myself in ways I imagined and needed them to respond to my surroundings. My presentation will focus on this way of thinking and making.

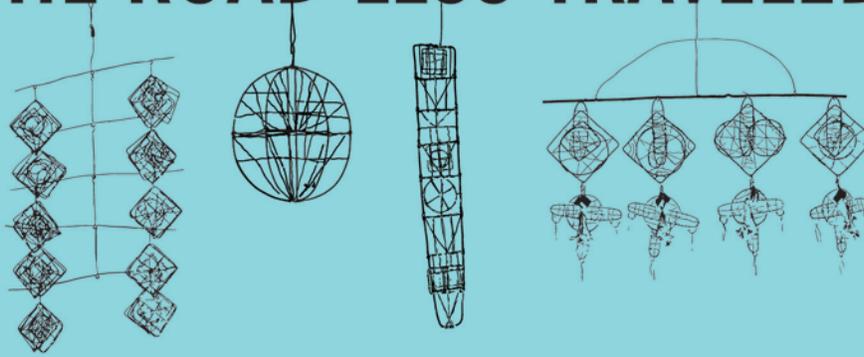
Katie Shlon

Through the research and experience of art environments that engage with the landscape, I have begun to reexamine my own relationship to the landscape and vernacular architecture as a first generation Arab-American. Recognizing the landscape as a foundation for mutual understanding allows it to be a space for creating a sense of belonging in the world. The landscape is constantly growing and changing and surrounding us; yards and gardens providing a space for nurturing but also for humility are on the edge of public and private space, and render us both powerless and powerful. My exploration of these topics is mainly through sound, using audio field recording as a way to understand our individual actions within a larger context and allowing me to act as both artist and archivist of the work. I will discuss one project, *Play Some Songs to Make the Plants Grow*, an album of improvised music and field recordings I made while visiting vernacular art environments across the Western half of the U.S. I will also discuss my current practice which involves work with an international collective of artists that meets at a self-built remote project space in northwest Scotland. Our works range from taking care of the house and communal dinners to making site-specific musical instruments and sound collage.

Michal Lynn Shumate

This presentation is a two-part exploration of Bomarzo's sixteenth-century Sacro Bosco: its physical situation within the hills north of Rome and its ongoing reception in the popular and artistic imagination. Important to understanding the Sacro Bosco is the physical landscape that surrounds it: the sculpture gardens of the same period in neighboring towns like Bagnaia's Villa Lante, and the Etruscan ruins that dot the surrounding woods. While most

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academic literature on the site focuses on cracking the code of the garden figures' arrangement and inscriptions—theories range from alchemy to the zodiac—this paper takes up the reception of the “Monster Park” in the twentieth century, from contemporary fashion spreads, to Herbert List’s photographs, to Manuel Mujica Láinez’s 1962 invented autobiography of the garden’s creator, Vicino Orsini. This contextualization delves into primary and secondary literature alongside a presentation of photographic observations made during a series of visits to the site between 2015 and 2017. In addition to the cultural and historical landscape, I explore the shifting landscape of the park as it is experienced today; depending on the hour or the season, it is a deserted, surreal refuge or a campy playground swarming with schoolchildren.

Brett Hanover

My presentation draws on research related to a recent experimental documentary film which was based in part on a transmedia paracosm created by the furry artist Rukus, a close collaborator of mine who passed away in 2008. Central to his world-building project was the interaction between a young child (his personal avatar) and an elaborate imaginary machine dubbed the “Altered Dreamers Project.” I plan to look at the operation of this machine from a new media/systems aesthetics perspective, interpreting it as a diagram expressing a certain arrangement of psychological processes. I connect Rukus’s work to the work of other world builders who created meta-machines, including Emery Blagdon and George Van Tassel, suggesting a way of reading these pieces as functional (metaphysical) circuits.