

FOR PASSHE OFFICE USE ONLY: FPDC proposal #

University Proposal # 1

Project Title:

Classroom-to-the-Field – Creating a Model Program: Art as Environmental Remediation

RFP Category : 3

Total Grant Amount Requested from FPDC: \$5,845

Discipline: Art

Sub-Discipline: Three-Dimensional Design

Project Director (name, position, department, university, telephone number, and e-mail address):

Steve Loar

Associate Professor, Department of Art

Director, the Center for Turning and Furniture Design

Indiana University of Pennsylvania

(724) 465-0758 or slowtech@iup.edu

Faculty Status (see definitions below):

Tenured

Probationary

Non-Tenure Track

Other Participants (names, departments, e-mail addresses):

IRB Status:

Approved (IRB #

)

Pending

N/A

ABSTRACT (one paragraph of approximately 150 words in non-technical language):

Public awareness of my students' artwork made of recyclable plastic has brought about a serendipitous introduction to a seemingly idyllic setting in the Bahamas that is being blighted by mounting marine debris – primarily plastic. I will draw upon my years as a creative teacher, guide, and mentor in order to produce a structured experience that allows for the making of engaging artwork while empowering future educators and leaders. I will consolidate several recurring themes from 29 years of collegiate instruction by creating a new art curriculum based in Three Dimensional Design. This course will fuse these interests into a single, intense, 3-week experience purposely placed in a demanding low-tech outdoor environment. This request will fund fees and expenses as an Artist-in-Residence at the Maritime Arts and Inspiration Center and for those of a Graduate Research Assistant in order to properly plan and oversee 10 to 18 undergraduates.

Endorsement: _____

Co-Chairs, University Faculty Professional Development Committee

Endorsement: _____

University President

Date: _____

Background and Significance

As a teacher of Three-Dimensional Design, I have been experimenting for 29 years with student assignments that use recycled materials, but without great personal satisfaction. In stumbling upon the work of David Edgar in September of 2007, I saw an answer to my quandry. Coincidentally, the 2007/08 IUP Common Freshman Reader, "Field Notes from a Catastrophe", had added fuel to my long time interest in physically heightening my student's awareness of our planets limited resources, our country's nonchalant view of waste, and the creative individual's potential role in initiating solutions. With this impetus, I sponsored David as a Visiting Artist for Three-Dimensional Design in December of 2007 (Indiana University of Pennsylvania, Indiana, PA. Partially funded by an IUP/USRC Small Grant).

David Edgar's work (www.plastiquarium) creates a dramatic forced association between caricatures of sea creatures and the familiar colors and graphics of the supermarket shelf – and our waste bins. Hopefully, a visit to his gallery will bring a smile to your face as it did mine the first time I saw one of his fish. His work uses the detergent bottle, the insignificant soft drink bottle cap, and even the lid to a latte as unique and innovative materials for art making that also stimulates an awareness of recycling. The resulting lightweight colorful works of art embrace a festive aesthetic as they comment on our fragile ecology. Even for the non-artist, they bring about a child-like "a-ha" of both a creature and a discarded product. Simple tools, in combination with free materials, make this non-toxic process exceptionally engaging and affordable. However, these humble materials point out the essential problem of working with found objects – it is other people's trash. They don't see it. It is invisible.

David sees his role as an innovator of plastic as an art material, but also as something of a Johnny Appleseed, planting the idea of its use wherever he can so that the idea spreads and blossoms in ways impossible for him to foresee. The inclusion of work by four of my freshmen in the Gallery section of David's forthcoming book, Fantastic Recycled Plastic, is evidence that my work is part of this expanding effect. A series of Outreach workshops at IUP give further evidence of widespread interest in this art form. Recent press coverage (three significant newspaper features within a month and now an article in Waste Age magazine) has spotlighted an exhibition of 21 student works at the Indiana County Solid Waste Authority that sensitizes a unexpected and diverse audience. The recycling center actually has tour groups *returning* to the center because they forgot to bring their camera!

Goals and Objectives

Andros Island is the largest but least populated of the Bahamas. Its barrier reef is the third largest in the world. This reef was compromised in the 1960s when several channels were dug to allow large ships access to the island's freshwater pools. With local marine debris on the increase, there is now plastic trash and flotsam trapped and accumulating on these once pristine shores. **This course will collect plastic items from the beaches of Andros and spend two weeks exploring methods for translating that material into sculpture and small-scale architecture. The third week will see the completion of the projects, several workshops provided for local artists and a group of visiting U.S. art teachers, and possibly an exhibition/sale at a gallery in Nassau;** thus completing the cycle of sea-born rubbish by selling the completed artwork to some of the people who discarded the trash originally. *Recycling the Beach* will document innovations and discoveries made while using discarded plastic refuse, and transfer those skills and knowledge to others, both local artists and then later to a far larger audience via a website and articles. The class will also immerse the students in teamwork, community, and the natural environment; increasing the likelihood of their taking an active leadership role in a future defined by limited resources. In so doing, I will have stretched my skills and sensibilities far beyond my classroom experience into a dynamic new realm.



Description of Project

The IUP course “*Recycling the Beach*” is a 3-credit Art Studio elective of my invention that currently has 10 committed students, and 6 others who are seriously interested. It is scheduled for June 13 through July 4, 2009, at the Maritime Arts & Inspiration Center (MAIC) on Andros Island in the Bahamas (www.maritimearts.com). MAIC is a humble, isolated, off-the-grid arts center committed to environmental awareness. MAIC has described the course as “the perfect nexus of our mission and concerns”. It will transform the plastic pollution of Andros Island in several ways:

- Creating playful sculptural interpretations of regional animals and plants,
- Working with traditional Bahamian basket weavers to explore potential blends of old and new materials and processes using plastic as a weaving material, and
- Investigating wind and rain driven Automata (mechanical drive-trains & whirly-gigs).
- Integrate the materials and processes of the preceding three approaches into the creation of an artistic hut or shelter. A woven skin of bottle plastic, covered in detergent bottle shingles will cover a framework of driftwood and fallen timber.

Recycling the Beach has become the touch point of a far larger project that I have developed since the courses’ inception in October 2008. I am currently pursuing major external funding to expand the energy of *Recycling the Beach* into a university-based research program called **One Island**. It will investigate methods for creating art and architecture from common waste materials created by the global consumer society, with a special focus on the reuse of plastics. The One Island program will recruit heavily from the Millennial generation (born between 1977 and 1998) which is the primary Undergraduate student body in college at this time. This group of young adults is described as confident, hopeful, civic-minded, inclusive, and goal/achievement oriented. As a result, the university will be a fertile source of talent. Along with the labors of art, innovation, and inevitably engineering, One Island will vigorously pursue enhancing their skills of leadership, tolerance, collaboration, and creative problem-solving. In recognition of the project’s mission, these explorations will emphasize simple methods and work of the hand.

One Island will apply and adapt these skills and discoveries in-the-field through collaborative workshops such as *Recycling the Beach*. The workshops will be site-specific, using the waste materials available to the particular community. The workshops will field test the art making dexterity of the students in challenging conditions while impressing the rigors of sustained collaboration.

Regional traditions of art, craft, legend, etc. will be drawn upon for inspiration and interpretation whenever possible, and the community's particular environmental predicament will be embraced as a design opportunity. The discoveries and solutions of each workshop will build upon one another, creating a growing body of effective strategies and processes. The workshops will be a dynamic process of direct assistance, discovery, and information dissemination while the Internet, presentations, and articles will spread this knowledge to others as a Call to Action.

Recycling the Beach represents two of the three components of the One Island concept:

1. **Workshops** will be site-specific art-as-environmental-remediation projects **as typified by *Recycling the Beach***. These worldwide sites will be carefully selected for the fullest safe expression of the One Island mission.
2. **Momentum workshops** will be less formal get-togethers, involving the best and the brightest students in on-going research and design at IUP. At the first Momentum Workshop for ***Recycling the Beach*** on January 17, 2009 an ultra-low-tech working prototype of a spiral bottle-cutter was demonstrated along initial first architectural models. The cutter transforms plastic bottles into long weavable bands that can be used for making baskets and the like. Possibly more profound, though, the bands can be used in making wall and roof membranes for small shelters.
3. ***Recycling Summer*** is envisioned as summer school workshops at IUP that act as cultural and artistic exchanges. Select artists from other countries who are working with recycled materials will be sponsored to IUP, where they will teach a class. The ultimate goal of ***Recycling Summer*** will be to send the visiting artists home with an expanded repertoire of possibilities to enrich their lives and that of their communities, having enriched the lives of young Americans.

A central goal of ***Recycling the Beach*** is to document innovations and discoveries and then to transfer those skills and knowledge to others. Equipment funding is being requested to facilitate a comprehensive digital record of the workshop with its anticipated experiments, discoveries, interviews, and collaborations. The off-WWW nature of the MAIC site will require inventive solutions to post a web site. Afterwards the saved imagery and video be a rich source for an expanded web presence, print articles, and presentations. National Geographic magazine and the Discovery Channel are being approached regarding possible coverage of the class. Magazines such as Waste Age, Recycling Today, the Crafts Report, and the Artist's Magazine offer probable venues for articles. An ideal event for a presentation would be the semi-annual conference of FATE (Foundations of Art, Therapy, and Education).

Another essential goal of ***Recycling the Beach*** is to immerse the students in teamwork, community, and the natural environment; increasing the likelihood of their taking an activist/leadership role in a future defined by limited resources. My years of acting as an artistic cheerleader while building and guiding student teams will be tested by the varied and distracting nature of the island environment. Prior to the trip, there will be formal team-building activities to properly unify the group. The Andros Island experience will role model teaching, mentoring, and social and ecological activism at its best. It will heighten the students' appreciation of the planet's limited resources, their role in creating waste, the increasing dangers of marine debris, and the creative individual's potential role in taking positive and creative action.

As an expansion of my skills in staging larger-than-classroom events, I am already negotiating with a gallery in Nassau that is committed to issues of art and the environment. Rather than ***Recycling the Beach*** leaving our creations behind on the beach as another form of clutter, I hope to create a high-profile fund-raising event. The gallery is enthusiastic about sponsoring an exhibition, a well-publicized opening, and a charity auction. The proceeds of such an event might be used to off-set expenses from

this and future IUP remediation projects, for the gallery's exhibition expenses, and for the continuing work of the Maritime Arts and Inspiration Center. Notably, Nassau is 40 miles away by sea. Like the refuse from Nassau returning in a new form, my experiences as a teacher and mentor will have gone through a dramatic change in form while retaining the same sensibilities. An even more dramatic effect is expected for my Research Assistant. Ben Oddi is a mature young man with high school teaching experience who acted as my Instructional Associate in 3-D Design. He will be immersed in the heady business of the entire affair, will have a positive and experienced role model in me, and will be in a position to affect the outcomes of the course and its larger experience through his own decisions and dynamism. We will both be called upon to act creatively and responsibly in a variety of unusual conditions. Our students, in turn, will take part in an unusually energetic, experiential, and intense affair of communal art making and environmental activism.

Professional Development will, therefore, draw upon a large portion of my existing skill set and demand that it be reassessed, refined, and expressed in new ways. *Recycling the Beach* requires me to create a model course and anticipate its potential within academia, while envisioning it within the much larger and pressing business of the planet's fate. It demands the creation of on-going "buy-in" and energy for a group of students while developing the necessary logistics of materials, needs, and activities for a workplace that is only known through a handful of romantic images on the Internet. With three Study Abroad trips to my experience, this class has a totally new concept, a totally new set of needs, and is totally new in terms of intentions and scope. Even for a big-vision person such as myself, this is a daunting task. But I have gained new energy and vitality in mentoring a group that is inspired by the idea of personal commitment and meaningful, even if hard and dirty, work.

Expected Outcomes

Recycling the Beach will move the art making process from a spacious new university studio space to rustic and challenging conditions that include blowing sand, limited solar electric by day, lots of bugs, sun, and heat, no cell phone access, and an extremely limited satellite email system. And as MAIC says, "There is almost no indoors here". We will be, essentially, out of touch. Even acquiring of the used plastic and flotsam by scavenging the beach and processing the material will be a dramatic change from a modern, clean, and safe county recycling center with its free pre-sorted materials. The Bahamas site, and its mounting problem of non-biodegradable refuse, undoubtedly approximates conditions in other challenged locales around the world, while offering an unusual combination of an art center with local plastic pollution, in a safe isolated locale. This new curriculum and my role in refining it will evolve into much more expansive activities. The large vision of this project is to establish methods where-by some of the impoverished peoples of the world might create art, income, and even shelter; all the while remediating the ecology of their environment.

Recycling the Beach will collect plastic items from the beaches of Andros and spend two weeks exploring methods for translating that material into sculpture and possibly, small-scale architecture. The third week will see the completion of the major projects, several workshops provided for local artists and a group of visiting U.S. art teachers, and possibly an exhibition/sale. With most of my personal sculpture being collaborative, I look forward to working with the Bahamian artists, especially the basket weavers. The students and I will be at once avant garde artists exploring new materials and forms in conjunction with traditional ways of working, while acting as cultural anthropologists. The positive energy that has thus far resulted from this project proposal far exceeds any previous venture. **Like the refuse from Nassau returning in a new form, my students and I will return transformed from *Recycling the Beach*.**

REQUIRED FORMAT FOR BUDGET SUMMARY

Round off all numbers to the nearest dollar, and list only whole dollar amounts.

Project Budget	Proposed	University Grant Sources	Other Revenue Totals	Contribution
Salaries/Stipends		(5)		
Student Wages				
Benefits	XXXXXX			
Honoraria (for consultants)				
Supplies				
Equipment	1025 (1)			
Operating Expenses				
Travel	1380 (2)			
Other (specify)	3440 (3)		1620 (4)	
TOTALS	5845*		1620	

* **This figure is the total grant amount requested from the FPDC and must be listed on the title page of the proposal.** Check addition carefully.

Budget Notes – Provide supporting detail for all budget items that are not self-evident or fully explained in the proposal narrative. Show how particular amounts were calculated.

(1) Equipment:

Memory camcorder, Sony: \$595

Portable Solar Panel: \$430

Note: Funding is being requested to facilitate a comprehensive digital record of the workshop with its anticipated experiments, discoveries, interviews, and collaborations. The off-WWW nature of the MAIC site will require us to post a website after the fact. Still cameras are assumed to be readily available.

(2) Travel:

Airfare, Pittsburgh to/from Ft. Lauderdale for Steve Loar and Ben Oddi: \$800

Airfare, Ft. Lauderdale to/from Andros Island, Bahamas for Steve Loar and Ben Oddi: \$580

(3) Facilities, room, and board, 3 weeks inclusive accommodations for Steve Loar: \$1820

Facilities, room, and board: 3 weeks inclusive accommodations for Research Assisitant: \$1620

Note: Due to its small size, a pay-your-way structure is necessary for the Maritime Arts & Inspiration Center (MAIC) to exist. Artists pay MAIC by the week for access to their facilities, room, and board. I am proposing to also pay for such expenses for a Research Assistant.

(4) Matching facilities, room, and board, MAIC: (Second Research Assistant),

for -1- person for 3 weeks, based upon -8- students registered.

(5) Salary:

Steve Loar's salary for this course, paid for by the College of Fine Arts.

Principal Investigator: VITAE

Steve Loar began his formal work at Indiana University of Pennsylvania in August 2005 as Director of the Center for Turning and Furniture Design, having initiated its concept, development, and external funding contacts while at the Rochester Institute of Technology (NY). He is also Faculty in the Department of Art, teaching Three-dimensional Design.

Steve is widely recognized as one of the primary innovators in the development of the field of contemporary woodturning. As such, his artwork is in major public and private collections throughout the United States, and is featured in over 30 books and texts. He lectures regularly at major conferences, and has articles appearing frequently in major publications. Steve's teaching expertise is Three-Dimensional Design, with special interests in introductory design curriculum, creativity, teams, and the issues of transition to college. Prior to his work at IUP, Steve retired as a Professor from RIT after 25 years of university teaching and administrative positions. He is past Director of RIT's School of Art, School of Design, and School for American Crafts, having previously been the Chair of the School for American Crafts.

Education

- Master of Arts, Design Studio, College of Visual Art, Northern Illinois University, IL, 1975
- Bachelor of Science, Studio Art, College of Visual Art, Murray State University, KY, 1972

Grants (1996 to 2008)

Steve was recently recognized as 2008 *Researcher of the Year* for the IUP College of Fine Arts. In addition to writing grants in support of professional and curriculum development, student scholarships, and student events related to his teaching and the Foundations Department, Steve has worked as a freelance associate for a private foundation. To date, he has facilitated the awarding of over \$1,800,000. Included in this work was the grant to IUP for the creation of the *Center for Turning and Furniture Design*.

Boards of Directors (current)

- 1) Wood Turning Center, Philadelphia, PA
- 2) Craft Organization Development Association (international)
- 3) Program Advisory Council - Professional Studio Artist Program, Kentucky School of Craft, Hazard Community and Technical College, Hazard, KY

Consulting (recent/pro bono)

Northern Tier Cultural Alliance and Meritage Consulting, of Charlotte, NC for the conceptualization and development of a proposed school of craft in Mansfield, PA; Maine Craft Association; Pennsylvania Guild of Craftsmen; American Association of Woodturners for the conceptualization of a book; Lumber Heritage Region *Wood Artisan Network Development Project*.

Previous University Teaching

History of Architecture, Interiors, and Furniture; Seminar for Teaching Assistants; Forms of Inquiry (graduate writing/thesis prep); 2-D Design; Crafts Design; Design I and II; Basic Wood Technology; Freshman Seminar; Creative Sources; and Summer 3-D Design for Transfers. Includes work with 57 mainstreamed hard-of-hearing/deaf students since 1982.

Honors and Recognition (selected)

- Students Published: Work by 4 freshman students of 3-D Design accepted for publication in the Gallery section of "*Fantastic Plastic*", by David Edgar's, due Fall 2009
- Contribution to the field: One of 23 individuals identified who were active in contemporary woodturning in 1986 at the founding of the American Association of Woodturners and who remain active and influential in 2006
- Contribution to the field: One of 69 individuals identified as having produced work that was pivotal to the development of contemporary woodturning, Wood Turning in North America Since 1930, by The Wood Turning Center and the Yale University Art Gallery, 2001

Visiting Artist and Educator (selected/recent)

- Guest Artist: *Echo Lake IX*; 1 of 4 academic/professional artists invited to participate with group of 24, a three-day national invitational collaborative workshop of turners and furniture makers, Bucks County Community College, New Hope, PA, June 7-10, 2007
- Invited Juror: 1 of 6 national-level furniture and design professionals, the *Vermont Fine Furniture and Wood Products Competition*, with exhibition and book, Vermont Wood Products Industry, July 2006

Exhibitions (selected/recent of 127 since 1978)

- Over the Edge: Woodturning Into Sculpture, international invitational, exhibition and catalog, a second exhibition focusing on "... works by lathe artists in North America who have 'pushed the envelope' and contributed significantly to inspire the growth of the entire field of turned wood art over the last half century", University of Idaho, 2008
- Japanese Bowls: A Western Perspective, international collaborative invitational, exhibition and catalog (print and internet), 1 of 50 selected U.S. turners for reinterpretation rough Urushi bowl blanks, the American Association of Woodturners; St. Paul, MN, 2007
- Turning Twenty – Still Evolving: international/invitational, 1 of 23 professional turners who were active in 1986 and who remain active and influential in 2006, celebrating the 20th anniversary of the American Association of Woodturners 1986 - 2006, exhibition/book/traveling, 2006

Writing (selected/recent of 46 since 1988)

- Foreword: Turned For Use II, exhibition catalog, by invitation, American Association of Woodturners, April 2008
- Articles: *The Adirondack Chair*, articles included an expanded catalog *Essay* with 17 photos of student work, an *Interview*, and a revised *History*, WOODWORK, August 2007

In Print and In Media (selected/recent)

- Steve Loar was discussed at length as an inspiring teacher in an article by Betty Scarpino (the Center's first Artist-in-Residence in Spring 2006 and former workshop student), *The Journal*, American Association of Woodturners, May 2007
- "Steve Loar is probably the best example of an orchestrator in the woodworking field today...." [as part of a discussion of collaboration-as-orchestration]
- Connie Mississipp, *Emma Lake 1998*, WOODWORK, February 1999.

References

Marine Debris

- Pocket Guide to Marine Debris (NOAA technical report), C. Ribic
- Marine Debris: Sources, Impacts, and Solutions, J.M. Coe and D.B. Rogers
- Tackling Marine Debris in the 21st Century, National Academies Press

Folk Art

- Contemporary American Folk Art: A Collector's Guide, C. & J. Rosenak
- American Folk, G.W.R. Ward, A. Duda, P.A. Parmal, S.W. Reed
- Secrets of Rusty Things: Transforming Found Objects into Art, M. deMeng

Architecture

- Design Like You Give a Damn: Architectural Responses to Humanitarian Crises, by Architecture for Humanity, K. Stohr, C. Sinclair
- Rural Studio: Samuel Mockbee and an Architecture of Decency, A. Oppenheimer, D. & T. Hursley
- Proceed and Be Bold: Rural Studio After Samuel Mockbee, A. Oppenheimer, D. & T. Hursley
- 101 Things I learned in Architecture School, M. Frederick
- Green Architecture (Architecture and Design), J. Wines
- Experimental Eco-Design: Product, Architecture, and Fashion, C. Brower, R. Mallory, Z. Ohlman
- Portable Houses, I. Rawlings, M. Abel
- More Mobile: Portable Architecture for Today. J. Siegal Folding Architecture (Architectural Design Profile), G. Lynn
- Micro: Very Small Buildings, R. Slavid
- XS: Big Ideas, Small Buildings, P. Richardson, L. Dietrich
- Fabric Architecture: Creative Resources for Shade, Signage, Shelter, S.J. Armijos
- African Nomadic Architecture: Space, Place, and Gender, P. Lebel