

MILLER GALLERY AT CARNEGIE MELLON

FALL 2008 EXHIBITION SCHEDULE PREVIEW

YOUR TOWN, INC.

Big Box Reuse with Julia Christensen

Curated by Astria Suparak

Aug. 29–Nov. 22, 2008

EVENTS AND RELATED PROGRAMS:

- **Hometown BBQ Reception:**
Sept. 19, Fri. 6-8pm
- **Carnegie Mellon University Lecture Series: *Big Box Reuse* Presentation + Book Signing,** Nov. 13, Thurs. 4:30-6pm
- **Carnegie Museum + Walker Art Center**
Worlds Away exhibition: Feb. 2008–Jan. 2009
- **Society for Photographic Education:**
Mid-Atlantic 2008 Conference, Nov. 7-8



Spam Museum, renovated K-Mart building, Austin, Minnesota
by J. Christensen

ABOUT THE EXHIBITION

Big box buildings have increasingly dominated the American landscape since the 1960s. Author, artist, and researcher Julia Christensen spent the last six years studying these monolithic, free-standing structures and their resulting effects on our culture. In *Your Town, Inc.*, the Miller Gallery at Carnegie Mellon University will exhibit photographs and installation work examining how communities are changing in the shadow of corporate real estate.

Eighty photographs from Christensen's forthcoming book, *Big Box Reuse* (MIT Press, Fall 2008), illustrate the ways in which communities throughout the United States creatively re-employ the structures constructed and abandoned by multinational corporations, such as Wal-Mart and K-Mart. Resulting endeavors include: justice center, megachurch, senior resource center, elementary school, and flea market.

For *Your Town, Inc.*, an architectural construction on top of a parking lot will be fabricated by Christensen in collaboration with students at Oberlin College and Carnegie Mellon. The structure itself, *UnBox*, is a reaction and response to the big-box concept. *UnBox* demonstrates characteristics opposed to megastore values and conventions—it will be transportable, modular, built of recycled materials, and easily reusable. Furthermore, *UnBox* will be activated for creative and social uses, rather than retail purposes, by various groups from Greater Pittsburgh who can propose events to take place within this new facility. The building can enable discussion about urgent issues such as sustainability, user-friendliness, and reusability.

The parking lot in the gallery will be built to City of Pittsburgh code. The lot raises questions about the infrastructural aspect of our lifestyles—particularly, the auto-centricity of our culture.

Your Town, Inc. is an exhibition that explores the state of our built environment. Between the photographs, building, and parking lot, the audience will be asked to think

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critically about how their own town has changed in light of corporate real estate. And ultimately, the question will be posed: how can you reclaim power over the design of your town's future?

This exhibition is produced by the Miller Gallery at Carnegie Mellon University, in connection with the release of the artist's book with MIT Press. Oberlin College has provided production assistance to the artist.

ABOUT JULIA CHRISTENSEN

Christensen's work has been featured in the *New York Times*, the *Globe and Mail*, *Preservation Magazine for the National Trust*, and other publications; her new media, video and installation work has shown recently at the Lincoln Center, DUMBO Arts Center, and the Walker Art Center. Her book, *Big Box Reuse*, will be published by MIT Press this fall. She is the Henry R. Luce Professor of the Emerging Arts at Oberlin College and Conservatory in Ohio, where she teaches in the Studio Arts and TIMARA (Technology in Music and Related Arts) Departments. She has also taught at Stanford University and California College of the Arts, among other universities.

AREAS OF INTEREST:

- Architecture: Urban Planning, Landscape Architecture
- Art: Photo, Sculpture
- Design
- Environmental Studies
- Humanities: American Studies, Cultural Studies, Popular Culture

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION:

- <http://www.cmu.edu/millergallery>
- <http://www.bigboxreuse.com>
- <http://juliachristensen.com>
- <http://mitpress.mit.edu/catalog/item/default.asp?tttype=2&tid=11533>

ABOUT THE MILLER GALLERY AT CARNEGIE MELLON

The Regina Gouger Miller Gallery at Carnegie Mellon University has supported the creation, understanding, and growth of contemporary art through exhibitions, projects, events, and publications since January 2000.

The 9,000 square foot space functions as a showcase for experimentation, examination, discovery, and discussion. The gallery aspires to engage diverse audiences, to create and strengthen communities through art, and to stimulate, provoke, and encourage contemplation of the visual arts of our times. Over the last eight years, the Miller Gallery has exhibited work by Laylah Ali, Janine Antoni, The Art Guys, Michael Bevilacqua, Enrique Chagoya, Catherine Chalmers, Michael Ray Charles, Minerva Cuevas, Nicole Eisenman, Inka Essenhigh, Neil Farber, Karen Finley, Rachel Harrison, Arturo Herrera, Tran T. Kim-Trang, Glenn Ligon, Kerry James Marshall, Larry Miller, Takashi Murakami, Yoshitomo Nara, Shirin Neshat, Christy Rupp, Al Souza, Sarah Sze, TermiteTV, Kara Walker, Olav Westphalen, Gail Wight, and Sue Williams, among others. Notable Carnegie Mellon School of Art alumni including Mel Bochner, Jacob Ciocci (Paper Rad), John Currin, Cassandra C. Jones, and Shana Moulton have also exhibited here.

The Miller Gallery is a non-collecting facility located in the Purnell Center for the Arts, on Carnegie Mellon's campus in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania. It is a unit of the College of Fine Arts and named for Regina Gouger Miller, avid art collector, alumna of the School of Art, and principal donor.