

The Idea Fund application 2009-2010

Artist name: PLAND – Practice Liberating Art through Necessary Dislocation
(discipline: other – residency program)

Project title: PLAND, Phase One

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PROJECT SUMMARY

PLAND: Practice Liberating Art through Necessary Dislocation is an off-the-grid program that supports the development of experimental and research-based projects in the context of the Taos mesa. We focus on open-ended projects that facilitate collaboration, experimentation, and hyper-local engagement. PLAND is initiating a set of project-based residencies that challenge artists to create, experiment, and produce their own work within this unique context. In Spring 2010, PLAND will send out a public call for residency proposals and host a Summer 2010 work event involving a motley crew of thinkers and doers to aid in establishing PLAND's role as ambassador to the region and helping to make connections between visiting artists and local people. From the pool of submitted proposals, PLAND will identify one potential Fall 2010 resident who will participate in the summer work event in order to "test," or completely revamp, their idea(s) in anticipation of their formal residency. In Winter 2010 PLAND will organize a public presentation and discussion involving the Phase One Resident, collaborators, and critics. The presentation and discussion will take place in Houston, will be streamed live, and made available via podcast on PLAND's forthcoming website.

PROJECT DESCRIPTION

PLAND was founded in August 2009 when Nancy Zastudil, Erin Elder, and Nina Elder acquired a small parcel of land in Taos County near the old Santa Fe Trail and the Rio Grande Gorge. Arid and harsh – currently void of amenities such as water or electricity – the terrain is defined by sage brush, chamisa, and breath-taking vistas of open sky and the Sangre de Cristo Mountains. The region is home to alternative communities including the Taos Pueblo, several Earthship developments, and a scattering of off-the-grid homesteaders.

PLAND focuses on open-ended projects that facilitate collaboration, experimentation, and hyper-local engagement. We do not hold expectations about prescribed outcomes. We privilege process over product. We believe artists can do amazing things when supported and encouraged in new contexts. We believe that no context exists like that of the Taos mesa.

PLAND is initiating project-based residencies to transform our parcel of land into a more inhabitable outpost while challenging artists to create, experiment, and produce their own work within this unique context. Inaugural PLAND residents are encouraged to marry survival-based goals with big ideas, aesthetic decisions, social engagement, and experimental methods.

PLAND will initiate Phase One with a public call for residency proposals in Spring 2010. Research on Taos County, gathered by students from University of Colorado Colorado Springs (UCCS), will be made available to aid in the development of proposals.

PLAND will launch Phase One by organizing a one-week, on-site work event in Summer 2010 in order to foster relationships, future collaborations, and build a physical space for future interaction. From the Spring proposals, PLAND will identify one person to "test," or completely revamp, their idea(s) during this summer work event and subsequently complete a formal project-based residency in Fall 2010. We will host a motley crew of thinkers and doers for the purpose of accomplishing, or developing a strategy to

accomplish, the following:

- establish a framework of world-wide PLAND supporters and collaborators
- cultivate relationships with other mesa dwellers and artist communities
- scavenge for building materials
- construct an on-site permanent storage container
- generate impromptu “idea testing” workshops
- construct an architectural PLAND development blueprint
- address waste and water issues
- initiate Fall 2010 PLAND project-based residency

PLAND will organize a public presentation/discussion by December 31, 2010 at Rice University with our Phase One Resident, collaborators, and critics (plans exist to collaborate with Rice Design Alliance but unconfirmed). The discussion will stream live and be made available via podcast on PLAND’s forthcoming website. Houston is our host city because of her investments in sustainable building practices and alternative architecture, as well as her connection to radical, experimental, participant-based projects – specifically the Merry Pranksters Acid Test at Rice University, hosted by Larry McMurtry. PLAND finds that this and similarly controversial radical activities, both on and off the mesa, offer opportunities to engage extended communities and histories in a re-framing of an alternative embrace of the American Dream.

PLAND is setting preliminary efforts in motion with students at UCCS. As a UCCS adjunct faculty member and independent curator, Erin Elder teaches *Special Topics: Curating Theory & Practice* – a course she has converted into a hands-on practicum that introduces students to a legacy of artist communities both in New Mexico and nationwide, while collaboratively programming the future of PLAND. Artist Nina Elder is employed in Taos and continues to research the mesa culture, off-the-grid artist opportunities, and a variety of historical and contemporary desert activity. Houston-based administrator and moonlighting curator Nancy Zastudil is working to make connections for future collaborations amongst UCCS, University of Houston, and Rice University students.

PLAND acknowledges social tensions of the hardscrabble mesa community and views itself as ambassador to the region, helping to make connections between visiting artists and local people. We draw from the rich cultural history and Western pioneer spirit, working to harvest local knowledge in terms of sustainable building practices, scavenge and salvage practices, and local history.

PLAND is committed to documenting our activity online so the public may engage in vital ways, i.e. conversation, research, resource-sharing, donations, residency proposals, etc. This overall format allows us to protect, preserve, and provoke a more complex reality of the diverse community through what we do.

BIOGRAPHIES

PLAND: Practice Liberating Art through Necessary Dislocation is an off-the-grid program that supports the development of experimental and research-based projects in the context of the Taos mesa.

PLAND was founded by:

Nancy Zastudil www.thenecessarian.wordpress.com

Nancy Zastudil moonlights as a curator and writer based in Houston, TX, and currently works as Associate Director of the Cynthia Woods Mitchell Center for the Arts at the University of Houston. Her research focus on collective and collaborative art practices in the social sector, and she has held such positions as Assistant to the Director of *ZeroOne:San Jose* in San Jose, California, and Project Assistant for Temescal Amity Works in Oakland, California. She has worked and continues to work collaboratively to curate exhibitions in numerous cities including Chicago, San Francisco, Los Angeles, and Houston. Her writing, interviews, and reviews have been published in *Proximity Magazine*, *...might be good*, and *Curating Now*

addressing the work of artists such as Zoe Crosher, The Center for Land Use Interpretation, and Lars Bang Larsen. She serves on multiple Houston committees and advisory boards including Skydive Gallery, Project Row Houses, and Ryan Middle School. She holds a BFA in Painting and Drawing from The Ohio State University and an MA in Curatorial Practice from California College of the Arts.

Erin Elder www.red-legacy.blogspot.com

Erin Elder is an independent curator, writer, and teacher interested in collaboration, sense of place, and expanded notions of culture. She holds dual self-designed BAs from Prescott College and an MA in Curatorial Practice from California College of the Arts. Her research has focused on Drop City, the first of the '60s era artist-built communes and continues to do research on the countercultural activities of the American Southwest, and the Autonomous Artist of America. She has produced projects with a variety of institutions including Yerba Buena Center for the Arts, Württembergischer Kunstverein, Creative Time, the Center for Land Use Interpretation, and the Museum of Contemporary Art in Denver. She currently teaches about experimental art practices at the University of Colorado at Colorado Springs.

Nina Elder www.ninaelder.com

Nina Elder is an artist who examines the visual evidence of post-industrial culture, and its distinctive cycles of production, consumption, and waste. In her paintings, super flat, uninflected planes of color reference the impeccability of the machine aesthetic. Her work is concerned with banality and the proliferation of commonplace objects. She scrutinizes the aesthetic mitigation that often camouflages these complex sites of production, use, and disposal. She approaches the world through the trifocal lens of artist, environmentalist, and self-conscious consumer. Her artistic inquiry responds to the friction between humanity, the natural world, and industrial proliferation. In 2009 Nina received her MFA in Painting from the San Francisco Art Institute and she holds a BFA in Painting from the University of New Mexico, Albuquerque. She has exhibited in across the nation, including California, New Mexico, New York, and South Dakota.