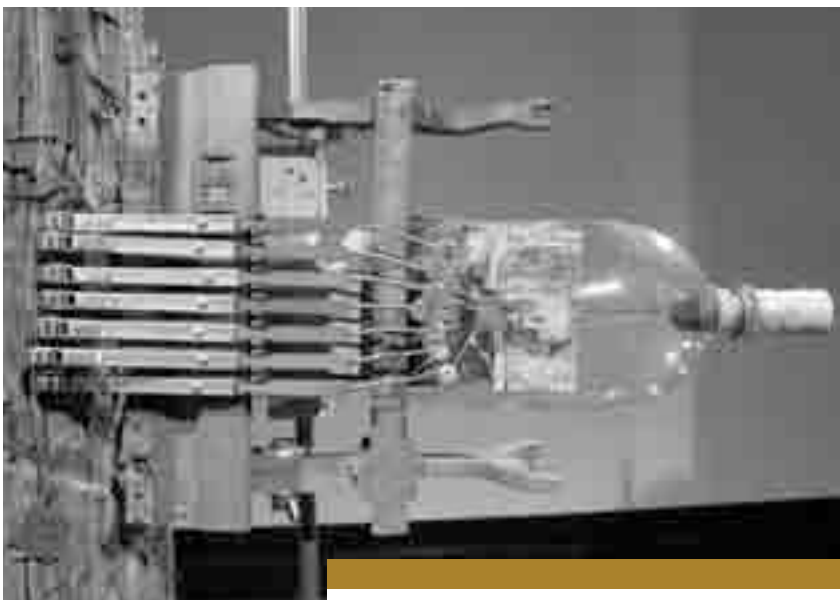


Patrick Renner's device converts patterns made by staples and nails into sound.



CITÉ BEAT

## After the Firestorm: The Future of Civic Art

In November 2008, the Houston Arts Alliance was the target of an ABC13 Wayne Dolcefino report on the civic art program. The segment—titled “Where’s the Art?”—questions the purpose of Nancy Retz’s “Synchronicity of Color” installations at Discovery Green. The structures, which cover stairwells, are repeatedly referred to as “waste” by an interviewee. The report goes on to question the rate at which projects have been completed.

The civic art team at the Houston Arts Alliance has responded with an exhibit at the Space125gallery about upcoming plans for Houston municipal artwork. It includes sketches, design elements, information about the process, and examples of civic artwork.

A bit of history: ten years ago, the city adopted an ordinance that sets aside 1.75 percent of municipal construction costs (not including price of land or road projects for example) to go to the development of civic art. During the past ten years, the city’s collection has grown to include upwards of 400 pieces. The vast majority of these pieces are found in local parks and libraries, while a significant portion are paintings held by various city departments.

The nine projects currently in the pipeline for Houston include several exciting works by locally prominent and nationally known artists: mosaics produced through community collaboration by Reginald Adams, a huge mural at the Looscan neighborhood library by Bert Long, a row of 38 carousel horses by Sharon Englestein, and the proposed pedestrian bridge collaboratively designed by Elmgreen + Dragset and the SWA Group, set to cross Buffalo Bayou at Montrose.

The Space125gallery exhibition at 3201 Allen Parkway will be on view until March 6.

—John Pluecker

OPENING

## RECOVERY > RECONNAISSANCE

### Singing the Freeways

“I live practically in the shadow of Highway 71 and can hear the constant hum of traffic from my backyard if the sound of condo construction doesn’t drown it out,” writes Barry Stone, a photographer featured in the Lawndale Art Center’s exhibition from January 23rd until February 28. One image features a mother and child beneath the monumental structure of the highway. The others employ dreamscapes. A fractured diamond. Plastic animals grazing.

On the second floor, Patrick Renner’s contraptions wrap around utility poles salvaged from Hurricane Ike. Visitors push a rod to set the machine into motion. It reads the patterns of the nails and staples in the wood and transmits the information to a music box comb housed in a plastic coke bottle that amplifies the sound for a wireless microphone. Speakers in the room play the high-pitched, syncopated song scored by the anonymous people who posted signs on the poles.

—Raj Mankad



Images from Barry Stone’s “Highway 71 Revisited”.



CALENDAR WINTER09

### CONFERENCE

**DE LANGE CONFERENCE VII**  
Transforming the Metropolis: Creating Sustainable and Humane Cities, Rice University  
March 2 - 4, 2009  
delange.rice.edu; 713.348.4695

### TOURS

**RDA ANNUAL ARCHITECTURE TOUR**  
SMALL HOUSES  
Saturday and Sunday, March 28 - 29  
1 p.m. - 6p.m. each day  
rda.rice.edu; 713.348.4876

### CONFERENCE

**GULF COAST GREEN SYMPOSIUM AND EXPO**  
Thursday April 16 - Sunday April 19  
Reliant Park, Houston Texas  
www.gulfcoastgreen.org