

# ROUNDTABLE #2

Strategies for Ecoart Success: Moving from Idea to Action  
Discussion Facilitators:

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## DISCUSSION OUTLINE

Introductions

Review handouts and discuss Ecoart as public art

Present recent public Ecoart examples in Florida

Discuss what steps AIPP administrators and public artists and consultants can do to encourage integration of Ecoart into green initiatives in both public and private sectors at municipal, county, state and federal levels.

# What is Ecoart?

Ecoart is not a new phenomenon. As you can see in the diagram below, Ecoart is one of many forms of art that seek to address environmental issues.

## Ecoart IS A FORM OF ENVIRONMENTAL ART



(diagram from [www.greenmuseum.org](http://www.greenmuseum.org))

South Florida Environmental Art Project, Inc.  
Definition of Ecoart  
(see [www.sfeap.org](http://www.sfeap.org))

“...Ecoart (ecological art) melds aspects of [environmental art](#), [activist art](#) and [community animation/mobilization art](#) with engineering and science-originated processes of avoiding/restoration of damaged ecosystems...”

The environmental art movement that has spawned so many sub-genres in contemporary times has its roots back at least to the time of Aristotle. What we see today as the primary forms of environmental art, including Ecoart, have evolved from activist impulses in art, dating to the 1960s, an era when all conventions were under intense scrutiny. The norm of presenting art in the “white cube,” a pristine, indoor gallery or museum space radically separate from the bustle of everyday life—and from nature--was vigorously challenged starting in the 1960s; and the practices emerging from that challenge have evolved and continue to evolve rapidly.

Artists engaged with Ecoart practice today create over a wide spectrum that includes intensive community engagement and sustained collaboration across discipline with scientists, engineers, architects, landscape architects, and other professionals working to address environmental issues such as hydrologists, botanists, marine biologists, weather scientists and many more.

There is much more information about what Ecoart is on the SFEAP, Inc. website at: [www.sfeap.org](http://www.sfeap.org). A broad look at contemporary environmental art practitioners can be found at [www.greenmuseum.org](http://www.greenmuseum.org).

Here is a very brief bibliography:

Kagan, Sacha and Volker Kirchberg (eds.). *Sustainability: A New Frontier for the Arts and Cultures*. Frankfurt/Main: VAS, 2008.

Kester, Grant, ed. (exh. cat.) *Groundworks: Environmental Collaboration in Contemporary Art*. Pittsburgh: Carnegie Mellon University, 2005.

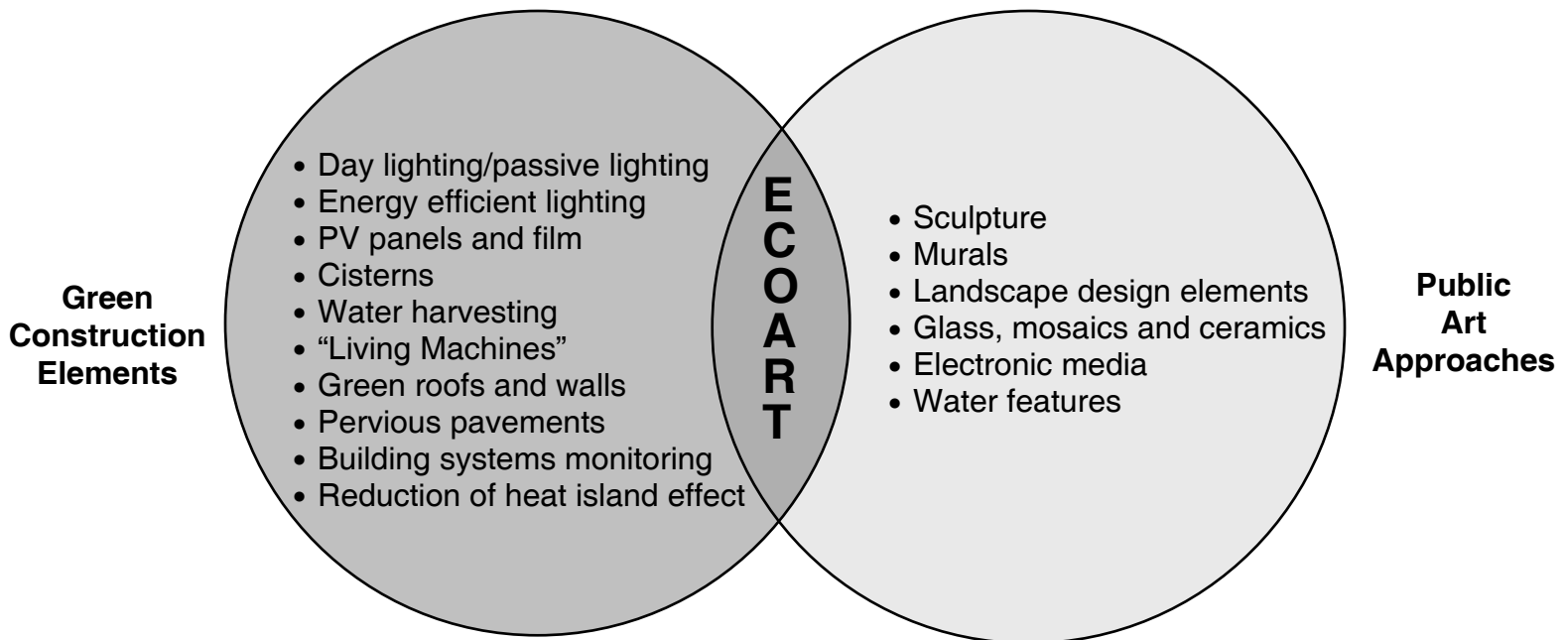
Matilsky, Barbara C. (exh. cat.) *Fragile Ecologies: Contemporary Artists' Interpretations and Solutions*. New York: Rizzoli, in association with the Queens Museum of Art, 1992.

Spaid, Sue. *Ecovention: Current Art to Transform Ecologies*. Cincinnati: The Contemporary Arts Center, 2002. Also online at <http://greenmuseum.org/c/ecvention/>

Strelow, Heike. (exh. cat.) *Natural Reality: Artistic Positions between Nature and Culture*. Aachen, Germany Ludwig Forum for International Art: 1999.

\_\_\_\_ (ed.) *Ecological Aesthetics: Art in Environmental Design--Theory and Practice*. Basel, Berlin, Boston: Birkhauser, 2004.

# ...When Green Construction Elements Overlap with Public Art Approaches...



Ecoart emerges  
in the built environment

# Ecoart Makes Green Building and Planning Technologies Visible

Artists who create art for the public spheres can play a significant role in greening our communities. Many have already been doing so through reusing and recycling materials into evocative works that educate the public. Others have found inspiration for their work in the natural world. Still others are finding exciting partnerships with architects, designers and urban planners and environmental scientists to bring ecologically sound technologies into the development and restoration process of communities across the U.S. and around the world.

Reclamation of brown fields, filtration of storm water, as well as riverine edge and wetland restorations that engage communities are just a few of the arenas that are increasingly being approached as art environments and challenges. Innovative designs are increasingly being developed by artists who are being engaged more and more frequently at the outset of development of both single buildings and whole community redevelopments.

Artists are becoming adept at exciting ways to utilize photovoltaic cells, panels and film to make building integrated power generation visible, exciting and informative. Facilities' and whole neighborhoods' waste water, heat and cooling processes can now be tracked with playful kiosks that allow people to enter their own "green" activities that help to reduce carbon footprint. In short, artists are helping to make these exciting "green" advances, often hidden from public view, into visible amenities with which people of all ages can interact, and from which they can learn about new ways to steward our environment.

Ecoart can and should become a high priority form of public art in all communities. It is not only highly desirable, as the best of public art always is, in underscoring the value of defining the identity of place, but it is also extremely cost-effective, providing as it does multiple benefits including habitat creation, education, recreation, water conservation and urban agriculture, among many other positive effects.

# How Can Public Art Administrators, Public Artists, Consultants and Other Supporters of Environmental Health and Safety, and of Public Art Help Make Ecoart a Priority in Communities????

1. Build language into RFQs and RFPs for green public projects (buildings, parks, natural areas, transportation, etc.) that will assure that development and planning teams bidding will include artists on their teams who are capable of working with new green technologies.

Some suggested language: *“Development teams should demonstrate knowledge and experience with sustainable urban planning and design principals and methods. [The planning study or building design] will be expected to incorporate feasible and cost effective approaches to water conservation, ecological enhancement, energy efficiency and production, durable/renewable materials, alternative transportation method, etc. Public art should be included in the initial stages and expected to be site specific and integrated with its environmental context, ideally contributing to other sustainable or regenerative aspects of the [plan or building]”*

2. Offer Ecoart as an option to satisfy Public Art Ordinance requirements.
3. Participate on city, county, government and private green task forces and encourage these bodies to include Ecoart in their recommendations on environmentally sustainable activities.
4. Partner with artists whose practice includes Ecoart as an important aspect, and with organizations and associations involved in environmental advocacy to assist, facilitate, educate and cultivate artists who pursue Ecoart practice and projects.
5. Seek out educational opportunities, listservs, newsletters and literature in order to keep up to date on the latest Ecoart practices and the evolution of the movement.

## Ecoart Examples in South Florida

- 1) Ecoart Treasure Coast--SFEAP, Inc. Pilot Community Education and Apprenticeship Program—collaboration between SFEAP and Arts Council of Martin County, funded by Community Foundation.
- 2) Integration of Ecoart into Martin County Comprehensive Plan.
- 3) Xavier Cortada's Coastal and Urban Community-Engaging Reforestation Ecoart Project Miami, Pinellas County and Martin County.
- 4) Michael Singer's role as Ecoartist-designer in municipal waterfront restoration, and gateway park transformed into a demonstration landscape that replaces turf, asphalt and concrete pavement with native plants, shade trees and stormwater infiltrating pervious walkways and parking lot surfaces, and stormwater treating wetlands, West Palm Beach.
- 5) Michael Singer's design that transform typical "big box" strip mall structures into inventive sculptural exteriors that encourage natural light but shade a Whole Foods Market from punishing west direction afternoon sun.
- 6) Lorna Jordan's Development of an Ecoart Master Plan for Broward County—progress to date.
- 7) "Elders' Cove" Ecoart project in West Palm Beach's largest park—restoration of same.
- 8) Boynton Beach Sustainability Team and progress toward including Ecoart in all planning and development RFPs and RFQs; integration of art advocates into Green Community Alliance.
- 9) Goal of collaboration between SFEAP, Inc. and Boynton Beach AIPP to develop an Ecoartist apprenticeship program to assist artists in acquiring skills and knowledge to be able to participate in LEED building program teams.

## IMPORTANT WEB BASED RESOURCES on Ecoart

The South Florida Environmental Art Project, Inc. [www.sfeap.org](http://www.sfeap.org) (see special presentation for South Florida USGBC on Ecoart and LEED buildings at <http://www.sfeap.org/images/USGBCweb.pdf>). A complete description of SFEAP and Arts Council of Martin County collaborative Ecoart education and apprenticeship pilot *Ecoart Treasure Coast* is at: <http://www.sfeap.org/martinacsfeaproject.html>

[www.greenmuseum.org](http://www.greenmuseum.org) Most extensive trove of environmental (including Ecoart) art online.

Xavier Cortada's Ecoart practice: [www.cortada.com](http://www.cortada.com),  
[www.reclamationproject.net](http://www.reclamationproject.net)

Michael Singer Studio: [www.michaelsinger.com](http://www.michaelsinger.com) (note the important white paper, commissioned by the Environmental Defense Fund, 2005-2007 - "Rethinking Infrastructure")

Betsy Damon ([www.keepersofthewaters.org](http://www.keepersofthewaters.org)) Damon is the mentor artist in the pilot Ecoart education and apprenticeship program in Martin County, FL, 2009-2011

EcoartSPACE: [www.Ecoartspace.org](http://www.Ecoartspace.org)

Jackie Brookner: [www.jackiebrookner.net](http://www.jackiebrookner.net) Artist who collaborated with land artist Angelo Ciotti on "Elders' Cove" in Dreher Park, West Palm Beach, first Ecoart project in South Florida.

Lorna Jordan: [www.lornajordan.com](http://www.lornajordan.com) Artist selected to develop the master plan to connect all parks, natural areas, greenways and blueways in Broward County, FL.