



RHODE ISLAND COUNCIL for the HUMANITIES



Secular Shrines and Commemorative Art:

A Program Resource Guide for the Summer 2007 Art Inquiry

New Urban Arts

Winter 2008

Providence, Rhode Island

About this Publication

“Secular Shrines and Commemorative Art” is a program resource guide based on New Urban Arts’ Summer 2007 Art Inquiry. This interdisciplinary summer program brought together ten high school students and five artists in a critical and creative exploration of shrine-making as a creative practice fueled by a human impulse to link moments and meaning to familiar objects. In the following pages, you will find activities, ideas, conversations, questions, and curriculum for arts workshops that stimulated our collective art inquiry. You will also find additional resources that were used to generate a new understanding and appreciation of shrine-making and related practices, including commemoration, memorialization, ritual participation and more.

We hope you find this resource guide useful as artists, educators and young people in sparking new ideas for your own creative practice, individually, collaboratively or even in the classroom. We encourage you to alter, combine, or adapt these activities to your liking to best meet the needs of your specific environment. This guide was created by New Urban Arts’ Program Director, Sarah Meyer and Brown University Graduate School Public Humanities Intern, Laura Cohen.

Acknowledgements

Mary Adewusi, Jillian Burdick, Hannah Candelaria, Rosa Cantor, Karen Joy Castillo, Tamara Gonzales, Kevin Gonsalves, Elizabeth Keith, Tiffany Pires, Kian Shenfield, Megan Billman, Heidi Born, Christina Bertoni, Erik Gould, Tamara Kaplan, Jesse Banks III, Emily Ustach, Megan Hall, Adrienne Gagnon, Martha Kuhlam, Nick Reeder, Brown University Media Services, the Rhode Island School of Design Library, RISD Museum, and our partners who made the youth-led shrine workshops possible, including Providence City Arts, Pawtucket Urban Music Project, Textron Chamber of Commerce Academy, Youth Pride Inc, West Broadway Neighborhood Association and the City of Providence Department of Art, Culture and Tourism. The summer 2007 Art Inquiry was made possible in part by a grant from the Rhode Island State Council on the Arts, through an appropriation by the Rhode Island General Assembly and a grant from the National Endowment for the Arts, along with major funding support from the Rhode Island Council for the Humanities, an independent state affiliate of the National Endowment for the Humanities, as well as donations from generous individuals like you.

About New Urban Arts

New Urban Arts is a nationally recognized interdisciplinary arts studio for high school students and emerging artists in the West End neighborhood of Providence, Rhode Island. Our mission is to create and sustain a vital community that supports young people as artists and leaders toward a lifelong creative practice. Founded in 1997, our free, year-round out-of-school programs build sustained mentoring relationships between artists and urban high school students. For more information visit www.newurbanarts.org

TABLE OF CONTENTS

<u>Introduction: What is an Art Inquiry?</u>	<u>5</u>
<u>Project Description: Summer 2007 Art Inquiry</u>	<u>6</u>
<u>Inquiry Workshop Activities</u>	<u>9</u>
I. What Represents You?	9
• Share an Object	
• Five Things in a Box	
• Pocket Shrines	
• Sound Shrine: A Collective Wish List	
II. How Do You Remember?	12
• Handmade Journals	
• Share and Tell	
• Lost and Found Shrine	
• Honor Your Hero	
III. How Do You Celebrate Change?	15
• Shrines to Who You Are No Longer	
• Birthday Book	
• Helping Shrine	
• Clothesline to Change	
IV. What Do You Witness?	19
• Roadside Memorial Shrines	
• Bearing Witness	
IV. What Are Your Rituals ?	21
• Ritual Guessing Game	
• Water Ceremony	
• Fire Ceremony	
• Participatory Altar	

Self-directed Inquiry Projects 25

- Bearing Witness
- We Are Not Friends
- Shrine to Self Acceptance
- Pasko-Christmas
- Boy Obsession
- Thoughts in a Box
- Get a Grip on Reality
- An Obsessive Crowd
- For Perry Who Hates Critics
- Bottle of Autism

Teaching Public Shrine-making Workshops 45

- Tips for Planning a Public Workshop
- Workshop Planning Worksheet

Resources for Secular Shrines and Commemorative Art 49

- Artist Profiles
- More Shrine-making Artists
- Books on Shrines, Altars and Altered Art
- Online Sources Related to Shrine-making
- Shrine Inquiry Guide For When You Encounter an Existing Shrine

INTRODUCTION: WHAT IS AN ART INQUIRY?

New Urban Arts seeks to empower young people to develop a creative practice they can sustain throughout their lives. We believe life is more meaningful if we pause to create and imagine. We recognize the value of creativity as a meaningful way to ask hard questions, formulate ideas, and imagine more promising alternatives for ourselves and the world. The Art Inquiry asks students to deliberately test their convictions and pose questions rather than answers, prompting students to explore the "why" rather than simply the "how" behind instinctual creative practice.

New Urban Arts developed the first Art Inquiry in the summer of 2006 as a new opportunity for young people during the critical months out of school. The Art Inquiry provides a learning experience distinct from our programming during the school year, utilizing greater time available in the summer to offer a more structured, intensive and humanities-based program. Students and mentors form a collective for five weeks to collaboratively and creatively investigate a chosen theme. Themes selected raise questions on the human experience as it intersects with creative practice. Our first theme in 2006 was Creative Cartography, which explored mapmaking and the human impulse to locate itself.

New Urban Arts utilizes the creative arts as a catalyst for discussion and inquiry, as people and ideas come together towards a deeper understanding of ourselves and others. Throughout the Art Inquiry, committed students collaborate on activities in workshops led by a team of artists, scholars, and program staff that cover a variety of media ranging from photography, painting, and drawing to collage, assemblage, creative writing, and sound. The workshop curriculum includes a balance of methods to guide creative exploration, including introducing relevant artists, researching related historical and cultural practice, learning specific materials and techniques, and group activities that encourage reflection. This approach promotes critical inquiry, analysis, interpretation and exchange of ideas about the world we live in and the human experience. It is important that the program curriculum remain flexible to directly respond to the experience of the participants, evolving around student needs and interests.

In addition to workshops inside our studio that explore the designated theme, students also initiate individual art projects on which they work independently throughout the summer to drive their own personal inquiry process. To further expand the Inquiry we welcome the perspectives and insights of others through public workshops at community centers that are designed and facilitated by the students.

Finally, the program culminates in a gallery exhibition of the work created throughout the summer. Students write extensive artist statements detailing the

intentions, process and reflection behind each piece, to be displayed as wall texts in the exhibition. Students receive a modest stipend for their participation, in recognition of the challenging work they are undertaking in the Art Inquiry.

Approaching its third year, the annual summer Art Inquiry continues to evolve as New Urban Arts investigates best practices for the program. For more information regarding New Urban Arts specific approach to program implementation and methodology, please contact Program Director, Sarah Meyer at (401) 751-4556.

PROJECT DESCRIPTION: SUMMER 2007 ART INQUIRY

New Urban Arts second annual summer Art Inquiry explored secular shrines and commemorative art. Providence artists partnered with youth to research the significance of shrines across cultures and to create both personal and communal shrines. We approached shrine-making as a creative practice that spans centuries, inspired by a human impulse to link moments and meaning to objects and art. Shrines resonate particularly strongly with young people, as they provide a space for meaningful interactions with the mysterious forces that shape our world.

Shrines are an integral part of many world cultures, appearing in diverse forms and serving multiple functions. Throughout centuries shrines have been created to record the human experience, reflecting and interpreting what and who humans value, worship, believe, desire and celebrate. Shrines do not need to be religious. They can be humorous or nostalgic, public or private, simple or elaborate, casual or formal.

They are deeply personal spaces that act as reminders of what matters most to the creator. Shrines can be built to provoke contemplation, comfort, courage, or creativity. Building a shrine can be a way to remember people who have influenced you or to commemorate the loss of a loved one.

The urge to establish spaces of refuge outside our daily lives is so great and innate to the human experience that we will subconsciously gather photographs and other meaningful memorabilia on office desks, bookshelves, car dashboards and dresser tops. Whether we realize it or not, these spaces tell stories about the values we wish to emphasize in our lives.

Anyone can make a shrine or altar. To begin, select objects that are steeped in personal symbolism to enclose inside your shrine, objects that immediately trigger specific memories and emotions when you first look at them.

These objects might be photographs, drawings, poems, postcards, quotations, rocks, gems, statues, beads, ribbons, certain colors, sentimental gifts, movie tickets that

remind you of a specific day with someone important to you, charms, and amulets or talismans, objects thought to bring good luck and protection.

A way of sustaining continued use of your shrine is to include objects that require tending to, like flowers, fruit, water or candles. The scale is entirely your choice, as a shrine doesn't need to be large and intrusive to impact your life. In fact, shrines can even be portable and travel with you to work, on vacation, or even every day inside your pocket.

During the Summer of 2007, 10 high school students participated in a five week study of secular shrines and commemorative art, meeting three days a week for three hours in the afternoon. These students participated in workshops led collaboratively by New Urban Arts Program Director Sarah Meyer, Brown University Graduate School Public Humanities Intern Laura Cohen, Brown University Undergraduate Megan Billman, Teaching Artist and RISD alumni Heidi Born, and Scholar in Residence Christina Bertoni.

Professor Bertoni, whose own artwork frequently references the themes of commemoration and sacred space, contributed significant knowledge to the program, including presentation of a historical slide lecture, participating in a ritual exploration workshop, conducting a reflective critique of culminating art work, creating a participatory altar for a public exhibition, and contributing to this resource guide a list of questions that are helpful in deconstructing shrines. Her consistent presence throughout the summer program contributed to an informed and profound inquiry into an overlooked human experience. As a collaborative team, artists, scholars and students successfully completed a lively inquiry, with over 400 people participating in public events and workshops.

Each section in this guide begins with a list of questions. These are just a few of the many questions that we asked during this year's Art Inquiry. True to its name, the Art Inquiry thrives on inquisitive thinking. Often the end result is not answers but more questions. You will probably be able to add many more questions to those listed in this guide.

With so many questions that can be asked about shrine-making and commemorative art, it might seem like an overwhelming endeavor. As you will find in this guide, we carved out a path of questioning and exploration that began with the personal. Our first weeks were filled with questions such as "What represents you?" and "How do you remember?"

We then expanded on personal meaning by placing shrines in a cultural and historical context. What do our personal practices share with shrine-making traditions across the world and centuries old, or with those happening every day in our own communities? How can understanding these traditions inform our own creative practice?

By the final weeks of the Art Inquiry, we explored the wider potential impact that shrine-making and commemoration may have. How can we bear witness through art? How can our personal actions make a difference? Is a ritual more powerful when shared among a group of people? Together what can we accomplish?

Our investigation came full circle when we shared it with others. As many students noted, sharing a topic with others often betters our own understanding. We conducted shrine-making workshops for audiences of all ages at various sites across Providence, including a Celebration of Change in a local park. Finally, we shared our culminating work through a public gallery exhibition where visitors had opportunities to materialize their hopes at a collective altar and add their wishes to a collective wish list.

We are proud of the individual and collaborative work that students completed in the course of the Art Inquiry. Examples and artist statements are included in this guide. We hope that we inspire you to begin your own creative inquiry into secular shrines and commemorative art.

I. WHAT REPRESENTS YOU?

- *How do ordinary objects have infinite meaning?*
- *What do the things we keep say about us?*
- *Do inanimate objects hold memories?*
- *What do you hold near?*
- *What do you carry?*
- *What do you wish for?*

Share An Object

Have everyone bring one object to share with the group—something collected or found, a photo or a poem—anything to tell something about someone. Share the objects and have each person share why their object is important to them. This is a good icebreaker to get to know one another better, and a chance to immediately begin applying personal significance to every day objects.

Five Things in a Box

Ask everyone to bring 5 objects tucked inside a box. Announce this activity well ahead of time to give everyone time to think carefully about their choices. The objects should say something about the person or represent them in some way. Collect the boxes anonymously. Later, sit in a circle with the boxes in the center. Have each person open a box not their own and examine the items inside. Guess the owner of the box. Do you know each other better now than when you started? What stories do the 5 objects tell about their owner?



Photograph of *Five Things in a Box* by Art Inquiry 2007 Participant, Kevin Gonsalves

Pocket Shrines

If you could take anything with you, what would it be? Make a portable survival kit that can fit inside your pocket. Pocket shrines are works of art and assemblage around something meaningful to you that can fit into your pocket. They can be made using matchbooks, film canisters, dental floss containers, small tins and bottles, earring and ring boxes—anything small and compact! We made pocket shrines from recycled Altoid tins. Students created a mini survival kit of what they need most in life. Across cultures and throughout centuries, shrines have explored themes around survival, because a shrine is often a place where people ask for strength in surviving the unpredictable and mysterious forces that shape our world.



Photograph by Art Inquiry Participant, Kevin Gonsalves, of a public shrine-making workshop at Providence City Arts led by Art Inquiry participants where youth made pocket shrines using recycled Altoid tins

Sound Shrine: A Collective Wish List

With gratitude to Samantha Broun's I Wish on transom.org for inspiration and Megan Hall for showing us how . . .

Our wishes say much about us. Combined together, these voices create a wishing shrine representing our deepest dreams and desires. For this project, students collected wishes on analog and digital audio recorders by interviewing people in the West End and downtown areas of Providence, Rhode Island as well as in the New Urban Arts studio. Students also added their own audio wishes.

We used digital Marantz (mp3) and minidisk recorders and analog cassette and microcassette recorders, microphones, tapes and discs. You may want to use editing software such as ProTools to transfer sound into digital files (needed for all formats except the mp3 recorder) and Garage Band (to cut, paste, rearrange and mix sound clips). We did. Our sound shrine is available for download as a podcast. Go to www.newurbanarts.org.

We displayed this piece during a gallery exhibition by offering an iPod with headphones for listening. We asked listeners to contribute to the Collective Wish List and add their own wishes on Post-It Notes and stick them to a wall.

II. HOW DO YOU REMEMBER?

- *How do we record our lives to make moments last?*
- *How do we tell the narratives of our lives?*
- *Can multiple versions of a story exist together?*
- *Is any memory or story more true or correct than another?*
- *To whom does a memory belong?*

Handmade Journals

Journals invite us to record our thoughts, our days, our memories, our wishes and our secrets. Making our own journals creates a one-of-a-kind place to retreat and write. Sometimes we keep our stories to ourselves, and sometimes we like to share them. Each time we share stories, we create them again.

Stack paper and fold it in half together to create a book. Secure your journal at the folded edge with staples or by sewing with a needle and thread. If you are using thick string, yarn or shoelaces, you can punch holes and thread the string through. You may want to reinforce the holes with grommets. Decorate journals with pictures, beads, lace, or anything you wish. Don't forget to write! We like to do it every day. Writing helps us reflect on what we learn.

Share and Tell

Adapted from an exercise developed by Augusto Boal, this activity is like the game of telephone. Pair up and spread across the room to have space to listen and talk. Each person tells a personal story to their partner that they don't mind sharing. Give everyone plenty of time to tell a good story and really listen to one another, and then reconvene the group. Each person re-tells their partner's story to the whole group. Did you remember all the parts of your partner's story? Did you tell the story differently than your partner?

Lost and Found Shrine

Make a list of 15 things you have lost. Include the small, physical things like pennies but also the larger, more abstract things like relationships. Write down the first things that come to your head. Next, make a list of 15 things you have found. Again, record the small and the big things you've found, everything from lucky pennies to lasting relationships. Then take a look at the list and circle words that you think you could include in your shrine. For example, to symbolize a relationship with someone include a photograph of them or an email from them. Or to symbolize losing your keys, hot glue an old rusted key in the shrine. The shrine can be inside a drawer, shoebox, or even a jar.

Honor Your Hero

Who are the heroes in your life? Consider creating a shrine to honor someone important to you. For example, in the book *White Oleander* by Janet Fitch a young girl remembers those who have had the most impact on her life by creating portable shrines inside a suitcase, marking that these people travel with her no matter where her journey takes her. To begin, make a list of whatever comes to mind when you think of this significant person. Then collect items based on this list, along with other objects that represent who they are and what they mean to you.

During the Art Inquiry, the founder of New Urban Arts, Tyler Denmead, moved to England after ten years as our Executive Director. To commemorate the occasion, to honor his legacy, to say good-bye, and to give him something to remember us by, students created a book where each "page" was actually a box that enclosed significant aspects of the daily life of the New Urban Arts studio. For example, the top layer was a miniature replica of the studio space, the next "page" was filled with photographs of familiar faces in the studio and things often heard around the studio such as "Where's Jesse?" and "You are sooo great." The final page commemorated what Tyler meant to the studio community. The book was bound with hot glue and ribbon so the stacked boxes opened like a book with each compartment easily accessible.



Founder Tyler Denmead receiving his Studio Shrine on his last day at New Urban Arts, July 2007



III. HOW DO YOU CELEBRATE CHANGE?

- *How do we mark the changes in our lives?*
- *Who have you been? Who are you now?*
- *Who are you no longer?*

Shrines to Who You Are No Longer

Create a list poem with words that describe who you used to be. To help, first visualize yourself and who you were friends with and what you liked doing and wearing at various points in your past. Jot down words describing what you were like back then. What you cared about. After five minutes, read the lists aloud around the circle, reciting the words quickly, one after the other, without pausing between each person. Then, silently, cross out the words that you feel no longer describe you.

Next, finish this free writing prompt:

“I used to be ... but now I am...”

Free writing is when you don't censor yourself, erase anything, correct any spelling, or take long breaks to thoughtfully construct your next sentence. It's a way to avoid writer's block because it asks you to ignore the inner editor and write anything that comes to mind and to not stop writing until the allotted time is up. After writing for 2 minutes, share your responses with one another, reading at least one line.

Using these writings, alter birdhouses in any way that you wish to represent who you are no longer. You may remove parts, add parts, or reconstruct the birdhouse altogether. We purchased pre-made birdhouses from a local craft store and created a blank canvas by applying gesso to the surface to prime the wood for painting and collage treatments.

Consider transferring photographs of yourself as children onto your houses, along with the creative writings from the above activities. Transferring photos creates a

neat layered affect, and also doesn't ruin your photographs! To transfer photos, make a clear, bold copy of the photo on a copy machine. Place the photocopy on the surface onto which you would like to transfer the photo. Brush wintergreen oil over the photocopy and allow it to sit for a few moments. Carefully peel the photocopy away from the transfer surface. Your photo should now be transferred!

Shrines to Who You Are No Longer can be displayed in many ways. We screwed them to wooden stakes and temporarily installed them in a park, then displayed them in a storefront window, and later hung them from the ceiling using clear fishing wire, like mobiles. Now they sit in a row, high on a shelf, without the original stakes to rest on.



Shrine To Who You Are No Longer by Art Inquiry participant, Rosa Cantor

Birthday Book

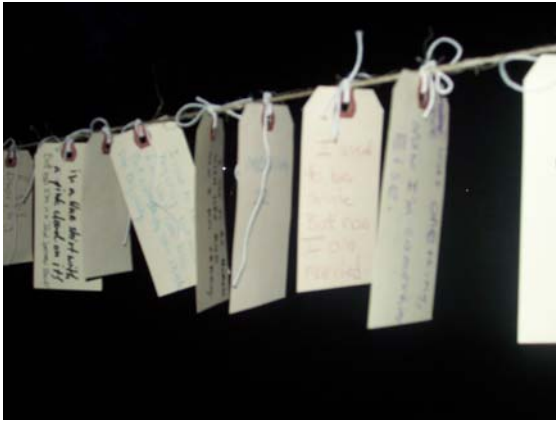
Inside a book write the next chapter of your life to celebrate your birthday. Find an old book that you can alter into an enclosed shrine. Using clamps to secure the book to a table or counter, cut out the shape of a square box inside the book pages with an X-acto knife. Leave a border of pages, creating a hollow box inside the book. Make sure not to cut the front or back cover of the book. Cut about five pages at a time, removing pages as you go along, and stop after you achieve enough depth to create a hollow space inside the book. Carefully arrange items that represent your hopes and wishes for the upcoming year. Include birthday cards, photographs from when you were a child or something that reminds you of the birthday wish you made as you blew out your candles. The birthday shrine can also be reflective, including objects that spark memories from each birthday you've celebrated and an assortment of cards or presents given to you throughout the years. You can add to the shrine when you turn another year older.

Helping Shrine

A shrine can focus energy and attention to something in your life you'd like to help or change. Think about people you'd like to help. People who are close to you, or strangers you've never met. Ask other people whom they'd like to help. Who they worry about. Make a helping shrine by including these names and something that symbolizes why they need help or maybe a picture of them. You can do this on a large piece of cardboard, inside the pages of a self-help book, or around a window frame. You can do this in a frying pan. Or on a chair, even.

Clothesline to Change

During a youth-led public workshop in a neighborhood park, we invited people of all ages to take part in the “Clothesline to Change,” a participatory art installation led by 2 high school students. People were asked to respond to the creative writing prompt “I used to be...but now I am...” on a shipping tag that was tied to a clothesline hung between two trees. The clothesline stretched 15 feet, creating a compelling installation as lessons of personal growth waved in the summer breeze.



Clothesline to Change, Armory Park,
Providence, RI, July 2007

Some of the responses to the “Clothesline of Change” include:

I used to be selfish... but now I care.
Mary, 18 years old

Once I was learning how to swim... but now I swim like a fish.
Vincent, 7 years old

I used to be a bad writer... but now I am a lyrical intellectual.
Rebecca, 17 years old

I used to be scared... but now I am only scared half the time.
Derek, 35 years old

I used to be a river... but now I am an ocean.
Ruth, 17 years old

IV. WHAT DO YOU WITNESS?

- *How can we use creative practice to increase public awareness or call attention to something we feel is ignored?*
- *What are some ways that we remember or commemorate people, events and things that are important to us?*
- *How do memorials impact collective memory?*
- *How does commemorative art provide a space for grieving, a place of remembrance?*

Roadside Memorial Shrines

Have you ever noticed makeshift memorials on the side of the road? These shrines are often composed of photographs, flowers, teddy bears, crosses, poems, and other keepsakes left by family members struggling to comprehend personal tragedies. They are created in response to car crashes, fires, gang slayings, and random acts of violence as a way to mourn and commemorate the life lost, and to bear witness as a reminder of the tragedy that took place.



Roadside Memorial, Rhode Island, Erik Gould

Erik Gould, an established photographer in RI and artist mentor at New Urban Arts, documents roadside memorial shrines in New England and shared them during the Art Inquiry.

Find out more:

www.erikgould.net

Bearing Witness

Chicago artist Nicole Garneau creates performance and visual art work that is directly political, critically conscious, and community building. In 2005, she created the durational project HEAT:05, in which she performed every day for a year to mark the ten-year anniversary of the 1995 Chicago heat wave, in which over 700 people died over a period of five days. To learn more, visit www.nicolegarneau.com.

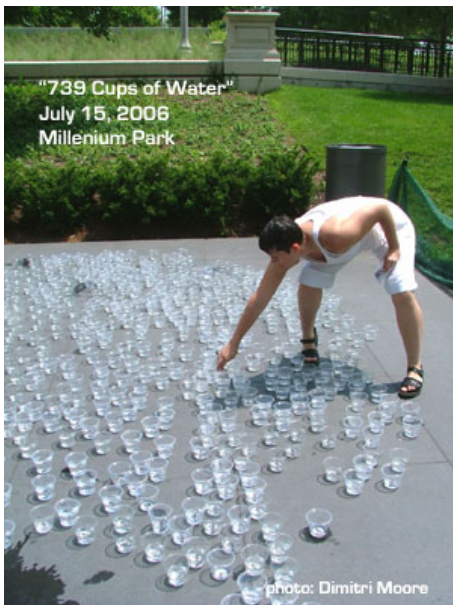


Image from www.nicolegarneau.com

Nicole Garneau's work inspired and informed the Art Inquiry as we discussed commemorative art and explored the idea of using art to "bear witness." What similar projects have you seen in your community? What do you feel goes overlooked or unnoticed? In pairs, select something or someone to bear witness to, and devise a creative project that will publicly call attention to the event or idea. Or, think of an event at your school or within your family or neighborhood worth commemorating, something that has not yet been recognized. Concoct a way to celebrate or remember the event. Consider contrasting different and similar interpretations of the event.

V. WHAT ARE YOUR RITUALS?

- *What are the daily rituals that define who we are and what we do?*
- *Is ritual more powerful when alone or when shared among a group of people?*
- *What is the role of natural elements in ritual?*
- *What is the relationship among ritual, accumulation, repetition and intention?*
- *What is the value in speaking our hopes out loud?*

Ritual Guessing Game

Gather in a circle and talk about rituals. Whether for special occasions or daily practice, we all have rituals that we perform personally, in our families and communities, and in a wider public sphere. Hand out index cards and have each person silently write on the card a personal ritual that they perform by themselves or with their families or communities that they don't mind sharing with group. Each person may decide what a ritual is to him or her. There are no wrong answers. Collect the cards anonymously. Then, go around the circle and have each person choose a card that is not their own. One by one, read the ritual listed on the card. The reader gets the first guess: whom does this ritual belong to? You can keep points and make this a game.

Water Ceremony

What do you wish for? Focus on one or more wishes that are especially important to you. Choose one small rock for each wish. Feel the rock(s) in your hands while wishing. Focus on your wish(es) as you hold the rock(s). One by one, place the rock(s) in the bowl while thinking or speaking aloud your wish. When everyone has added their rocks to the bowl, fill the bowl with water until all the pebbles are completely submerged. This seals the wishes together. This activity can be performed alone or in a group, though there is a special power in numbers.

Fire Ceremony

Fire is both a creative and a destructive force. Burning can destroy things or generate something new. You can perform this ritual alone or in a group, but please use fire only under supervision! We used a fire pit in an urban garden to practice the following burning ceremony:

1. What worries you? Write it down. One at a time, toss the worry into the fire and cast it away. Rid yourself of worries that consume you. As you drop the paper in the fire, say aloud "This is [your name]'s worry." You can share what you wrote down, but you don't have to.

2. Next, write down something you hope for, whether it's near or far in the future. One at a time at random, toss the hope into the fire. Calling it to you, say, "this is [your name]'s hope." You can share what you wrote down, but you don't have to.

3. Speak Their Names: Close your eyes. Visualize someone who has had a major impact on your life, alive or dead, stranger, mother, father, teacher, or friend. If you see many people, focus on just one for this exercise. Imagine when you saw them last. What were they doing? What were they saying? What were they wearing? Count together aloud 1—2—3! Now open your eyes and write down the person's name. One at a time, speak the name of the person aloud while dropping the paper in the fire.

Participatory Altar

With gratitude to Christina Bertoni

For our culminating exhibition, we wanted visitors to be able to share our experiences with ritual. We created an interactive altar on site and invited visitors to participate. You can do this, too!

Choose a table or other flat surface on which to place multiple bowls of water. Decorate the table any way that you wish, with a nice tablecloth or other decoration. Fill small bowls with water and space them apart on the table. Assign a specific intention to each, labeling it with a small folded placecard next to the bowl. For instance, we chose to use family, friends, peace, forgiveness, healing and intentions. Have plenty of small strips of paper next to bowls, small enough to fit inside the bowls when folded. Provide water-soluble markers for writing wishes, prayers and other notes into the bowls. This way, what is written down will begin to dissipate when the paper hits the water, and remain secret. Concentrate on the intention as you watch it disappear.



Art Inquiry Participant at the Participatory Altar

SELF-DIRECTED INQUIRY PROJECTS

Fundamental to New Urban Arts' mission is our conviction that meaningful learning occurs when students take ownership of their own education, rather than viewing it as an external mandate with little relevance to their everyday lives. Promoting self-directed learning and youth agency, independent studio time is built into the Art Inquiry program. This opportunity creates space and time for students to investigate the designated theme individually, creating final artwork that emerges from the student's own ideas and personal inquiry. Artist Mentors and scholars are available for support and guidance, introducing students to the tools and techniques that can help them realize their creative visions.

Independent projects in the 2008 Art Inquiry used a range of media which students self select according to their interests or skills. A few examples include Kian Shenfield's *For Perry, Who Hates Critics* which memorialized a teacher after his recent death, Elizabeth Keith's *Bottle of Autism* commemorating her brother, Karen Joy Castillo's *Pasko/Christmas* commemorating a cultural/family holiday tradition, Jillian Burdick's *Shrine to Self Acceptance* commemorating personal growth, and Tamara Gonzalez's *Boy Obsession*, a humorous piece about a fictional crush that prompts us to consider MySpace as a site of contemporary shrine-making.

BEARING WITNESS

The idea of bearing witness is to show something not normally seen or to cause people to think something they would not have normally thought. The thirty something signs that have been hung on garbage cans around downtown Providence commemorate the men and women that work to keep the city clean.

I want people to bear witness to the luxury of throwing trash effortlessly into the nearest can. I want to attract attention to the city workers that keep the service available and functioning. Having to empty can after can on a regular basis does not seem like a fun job, but it is one that is necessary.

More than drawing the eye (and possibly more trash) to the cans, my purpose was to give the laborers an extra thank you, letting them know what they do is appreciated, and hopefully brighten up their day. If more passers by saw the trash cans and used them more often, because of these screenprinted signs, that would be cool too.

Hannah Candelaria, 16



Bearing Witness, Hannah Candelaria

WE ARE NOT FRIENDS

This is a shrine to friendship. I've included the names of friends who have allowed me to become who you see before you today. The many eyes symbolize the way the world is forever looking at you, because of the people you associate yourself with. The mirror contradicts this idea, because it shows you what the world sees, but your eyes tell you who you really are. Technically there is no chamber in the heart for emotions, feelings, attachments, but somehow the heart still symbolizes the place that holds all of these things. The photographs are of memories of important times in my life where my friends have made a significant difference: prom, graduation, and hanging out at New Urban Arts. This summer I found a poem by Nikki Giovanni that summarizes what I feel about friendship. It's included inside the heart.

Mary Adewusi, 18

SHRINE TO SELF ACCEPTANCE

This shrine is symbolic of how I feel growing into the person I am. It's something I can look at and be reminded of who I am. It was inspired by being judged for how I look and how frustrating being placed into a certain role because of how you look can be. Recently I've been thinking about how unimportant looks are in the long run, especially if you're happy with yourself as a person.

I used wire and wax for the shelter. The figure is made mostly from clay, wire and cloth. The metal seemed like a good choice when dealing with body modifications (i.e. piercings), plus I like shiny things. The clay was a new material for me and I wanted to see how I could work it in.

Jillian Burdick, 17



Shrine To Self Acceptance, Jillian Burdick

P A S K O / C H R I S T M A S

For my independent project, I made a shrine to commemorate Christmas and New Year's tradition in my family. I used random beads, tassels, reeds, ribbons, yarn, a Clementine box, and Styrofoam packing material. I picked these materials because they looked festive and bright and vibrant, especially the round beads. They are significant to our Christmas tradition.

The round objects used in my shrine are actually for good luck. In Philippine tradition, round objects and round fruit are displayed during Christmas to bring good luck for the approaching year. Round objects are considered to be very lucky because roundness symbolizes prosperity. The stars included in my shrine represent the Star of David, which guided the three wise men to Jesus. My family hangs star lanterns every Christmas season, and they on their own symbolize Christmas.

One day, during the Art Inquiry, we were talking about rituals and traditions and I remembered about my family's Christmas traditions and everyone seemed interested in the significance of round things when I shared this with them. This piece encouraged me to use more symbolism in my artwork. Now that I've finished my shrine, I just can't wait for Christmas.

Karen Joy Castillo, 16



Pasko/Christmas, Karen Joy Castillo

GET A GRIP ON REALITY

When people tell me I'm never going to have a future, it really gets me down! So I took all those depressing awful words, and put them in a jar. I hope you like it.

If you can't read the whole thing, that's the point. Hopefully you gather that the ideas fall into several categories: Someone is going to beat me up one day, I need to make money to succeed, and I don't know what I really am. Clearly, they are things that need their own place to be, somewhere they can swim around in the confines of a narrow glass tube.

Kian Shenfield, 19



Get a Grip on Reality, Kian Shenfield

A N O B S E S S I V E C R O W D . . .

When we first started this summer, I had just one perspective of what a shrine is. I considered them to be a cave like thing with over the top decorating, like a sanctuary. But as we continued to learn of the different sorts of shrines, I learned to realize that they are as simple as an Altoid tin with a couple meaningful objects in it, and I took that in consideration when I made this shrine.

I wanted something with many things I grew up with, making it layer upon each other. Things I saw on TV or in my family and friends' homes. At first I wanted it to be over the top, like how I first thought shrines were, but then I felt they needed to be simple like the way people feel as they start creating shrines. You are not really aware of how big it becomes... just how it's meaningful for you.

That was another thing. Many times people do things unaware of others and tend to get out of hand. Like the parent who praises his child without noticing how the child feels about it. Then there is the person who eats too much for pleasure, the person who starves to feel happy but is totally unaware of their health. It all starts simple. So this is my shrine to show how I see others portray themselves and others near them. So have fun with it!

Rosa Cantor, 18



An Obsessive Crowd, Rosa Cantor

FOR PERRY, WHO HATES CRITICS

I've been waiting to write this poem ever since Perry Rosenthal died in April 2006. I knew him as a chamber music coach during that school year (my senior year of high school). I felt that my experience of him as a teacher and a person was only one tiny facet of the person he has been to everyone, which is the main reason why I have put off writing this for so long. Can I really do him justice? Am I just another critic with no authority? I've decided to write about how I knew him: I'm the only one who can do that, and it's the only thing I really can write about.

Perry's death came as a shock to everyone, including me. Part of the process I went through in working on this piece was getting out of the prolonged phase of shock and into a state of some kind of closure... although it's hard to tell how I'm supposed to feel.

Kian Shenfield, 19

For Perry, who hates critics

There isn't much I know of you.

I know that you like to get two burgers at the drive-thru, with pickles,
and scarf them down in five minutes before feeling incredibly sick.

I know that you read the seventh-grade writing exercises
on the wall of the classroom where we rehearsed,
wondering what was becoming of America's public schools.

I know that you hate critics with no authority
who have never picked up an instrument in their lives,
but you're still annoyed all week if you get a bad review.
("Too bad Perry Rosenthal wasn't playing loud enough.")
Yes, we know your part was meant to be pianissimo.

I know that once you met a big-handed jazz bassist,
and admire anyone who has to go through what she went through.

I know the stickers on your cello case:
the ones with sarcastic aphorisms go forgotten
making way for other memories:
The AIDS ribbon. The yellow-on-blue equals sign.

There's so much you told us,
and more that you never could.
We didn't know it wasn't just your mother that was ill.
We didn't know that there'd be no recital.

What happens to boundaries,
between teachers and students
between the living and the dead?
Do they last forever?

Is there some critic in the afterlife
still shouting jealously over your quiet solos?

BOTTLE OF AUTISM

I collect bottles and I've had some really interesting ones for awhile. This project gave me something to do with them. I used broken bottles and lots of bright colors to represent the autistic mind. Paint also has a way of glowing when painted on glass and I wanted that luminescence to make it look nice and kind of represent the essence of life. My brother inspired this project. He's autistic and once I saw a sticker that was a jigsaw puzzle and it was an ad for autism awareness. Then I thought of my bottle collection, and painting them, and breaking them, and putting them back together—like a puzzle. The broken bottles represent two things: the severity of autism in some individuals and the way some people view them. The large bottle is supposed to be my brother and the colors are for his fantastic imagination and thoughts. The colors are mainly to represent the brightness and diversity inside a mentally handicapped person, or anyone for that matter. I'm commemorating my brother in this piece because I love him and I think people should treat him like a normal person and not be prejudiced or afraid of him just because he acts different from "normal" people. Autistic people may seem "broken" to some people, but their thoughts are beautiful and they can never be expected to conform. Autistic people are usually understood as people who can no longer function, which is so not true. My brother knows more about history than I do and I've taken AP U.S. He's read *20,000 Leagues Under the Sea*, and probably reads more 'real' books than I do. Autistic people aren't supposed to have a sense of humor, but my brother does. He likes to make jokes and laughs at things I and the tv do. This shrine was made as an outlet toward the people I know, who know my brother. There are people who love me and think I'm great, but look down and alienate my brother just because of the way he acts. They deny him things that have been offered to me. I have never done anything like this before. Ever. All of my artwork has been random inspirations by whatever, but I've never done anything to actually represent something in my life that really hits home. I think I liked doing this.

Elizabeth Keith, 16



Bottle Of Autism, Elizabeth Keith

BOY OBSESSION

This person is not real. I don't know this person. I found him on MySpace. In my shrine, I used gum, toe nail clippings, love letters, a used straw, used tissue, hair strands, and a dirty sock, all of which belong to my secret crush Alex B. I used all these objects to illustrate a story that I made up about a boy I never met. I made this shrine to represent how some girls get obsessed with guys who don't even know they are alive. Shout outs to my sister and Alex B.

Tamara Gonzalez, 13



Boy Obsession, Tamara Gonzalez

THOUGHTS IN A BOX

The piece that I have created is a shrine to my thoughts. I'm the type of person who always has a million things on my mind. Sometimes these thoughts are clear, fuzzy, broken, even simple. I feel that the way our minds works is an important part of our lives. I used the reflective paper and broken glass to represent the concept of broken thoughts and unclear ideas. I chose to include images of my nephew because he is always on my mind, and is an important part of my life. He inspires me. The fabric that is draped over the shrine is cut to remind me that it's okay to let people in sometimes and show what's on my mind. I had a lot of fun doing this project.

Tiffany Pires, 18



Thoughts In A Box, Tiffany Pires

TEACHING PUBLIC SHRINE-MAKING WORKSHOPS

New Urban Arts values the opportunity for youth to both teach and learn simultaneously. A few weeks into the program, students further developed their summer inquiry into public workshops for diverse Providence communities. These shrine-building workshops occurred at schools, community centers, parks, and low-income housing and student tailored workshops to meet the needs of specific audiences and locations. These teaching experiences allow youth to transcend the traditionally passive role of program participant, and engage their inquiry process with new voices and perspectives that enrich their own understandings of the shrine-making practice. Following we share some resources with you for training youth to lead workshops for the public.

Students were introduced to curriculum planning methods that emphasized collaborative leadership and building an inclusive learning environment. We discussed qualities that we've enjoyed or disliked from our personal experiences with teachers and mentors, the role of the facilitator in organizing a public workshop, different kinds of leadership styles, a variety of warm up games to open up the workshop, and different formats for structuring the timeline of the workshop.

Workshops were typically 60 minutes and included a theme-related icebreaker, an introduction to shrines, a creative writing and sharing activity, and a creative shrine-making activity based on the results from the creative writing exercises. Each student worked in a group of 3 peers to co-facilitate a minimum of two public workshops, in order to allow students to apply lessons learned from their first teaching experience to improve their next workshop. Reflecting on their program experience, students expressed that teaching others about shrines improved their own understanding of the topic and was challenging and rewarding.

TIPS FOR PLANNING A PUBLIC WORKSHOP

The following is a structure projected for workshops 1 hour in length.

- | | |
|----------------------------|------------|
| 1. Warm-up Games | 10 minutes |
| 2. Introductions/ Overview | 5 minutes |
| 3. Writing Activity | 10 minutes |
| 4. Shrine making Activity | 30 minutes |
| 5. Wrap Up/Clean Up | 5 minutes |

Questions to ask when developing workshop curriculum:

- Consider your audience: How old are my students? How many people are in the workshops? What is the setting of the workshop?
- Is there progression? Will my students be ready to do what I am asking of them?
- Is there transition for one thing to the next?
- Are we doing too much of the same thing? (ex: writing in silence)
- What directions will they need to do an activity?
- What supplies will I need to have and how much?
- Am I ready to be flexible and redirect my plan to meet my student's needs?
- What is my back up plan in case the plan flops because I finish early or students don't receive the original idea like I had hoped they would?
- If one student doesn't want to participate, then what?
- Does everyone in my group have an individual role in leading the workshop that they are clear and confident about?

There are several important elements to consider when facilitating your workshops:

1. Being Inclusive:

Does everyone feel included? What happens if you don't like your students? What happens if they don't like you? What happens if one student isn't respectful of another in your workshop? A supportive learning environment must reflect diverse learners through respect for differences. We must agree to not exclude or disrespect anyone on the basis of race, ethnicity, language, sexual orientation, class, gender identification or age.

2. Participation Expectations:

Is everyone participating? You don't want your students to feel forced into doing something they are uncomfortable doing, but everyone must be expected to participate on some level. For example, during a writing workshop consider allowing students to read only one line from a poem rather than the entire piece. Be sure to make participation expectations clear at the start of the workshop.

3. Feedback:

Make time to offer your students feedback on their work. The first step is affirmation and acknowledgement. Try to be specific in your feedback, pointing out particular techniques or details that stick out to you. Next let the artist ask questions of you or their audience. Let them guide the feedback they receive.

The following are warm up games that are great for opening up the workshop:

- **Human Knot-** Have a group stand very close together. Tell them to reach their arms so all hands are jumbled and intertwined. Tell them to grab one hand for each of their hands, but not the one of the person next to them. Now they are a human knot and must use teamwork to untangle themselves into one circle without letting go of their hands.
- **Pass the Clap** – In a circle, one at a time, turn to the person to your right and they turn to you. Clap at the same time. Then the person to your right turns to their right and claps at the same time as this person. Go around the circle, passing the clap. Try it again around the circle, going faster each time!
- **Mass stand up** - Have the group sit in a circle, backs to the middle. Now, have everyone link elbows with the person sitting next to her. Then, try to stand up as a group.
- **Heads Up/ Heads Down** - Stand in a circle with your heads down. A Youth Mentor yells heads up, and everyone looks up and stares at someone. If the person you are looking at is looking back at you, you're both out.

WORKSHOP PLANNING WORKSHEET

Workshop Site: _____

Time Allotted: _____

Description of Participants (age, group size): _____

TIME	ACTIVITY	SUPPLIES NEEDED	LEAD FACILITATOR	BACK UP ACTIVITY

RESOURCES FOR SECULAR SHRINES AND COMMEMORATIVE ART

- *How have other cultures throughout history remembered stories and marked important events?*
- *How do other cultures practice shrine-making?*
- *What artists work with themes of shrines, rituals and commemoration?*
- *How can research into cultural, historical and artistic practices inform our own creative practice?*

Throughout the Art Inquiry, research was valued as a method of discovery that enriches the creative process, and also as a creative act itself. We spent an afternoon on a research quest at the Rhode Island School of Design Library to investigate the above questions. Each student chose a specific cultural or historical context to research with the assistance of RISD librarians, and we gathered together to share our findings. Some of our discoveries made their way into individual and collaborative work. We also gained courage and inspiration for our creative work by seeking out historical and contemporary artists producing work around our theme. Following we share some resources with you that most inspired and informed our inquiry, including artist profiles, web links, and book titles.

ARTIST PROFILES

Joseph Cornell

Assemblage, Paintings, Films



Untitled (Paul and Virginia)

c. 1946-48 (150 Kb); Construction, 12 1/2 x 9 15/16 x 4 3/8 in; Collection Mr. and Mrs. E. A. Bergman, Chicago

Photo by Mark Harden, from <http://www.ibiblio.org/wm/paint/auth/cornell/>

Biography adapted from "Artist Profile: Joseph Cornell" at Nancy Doyle Fine Art <http://www.ndoylefineart.com/cornell.html>

Joseph Cornell was born in 1903 in Nyack, New York. He had no formal training in art. His most famous and distinctive works were boxes he created out of wood, glass, and innumerable objects and photos he collected in New York City's antique and secondhand shops. Cornell's signature shadow boxes were originally conceived as gifts for individuals sometimes living, sometimes dead, often people the artist had never met, but who in some way had touched his life. His small wooden boxes (from 10-12 inches to 20 or more inches in size), carefully filled with various objects, were usually covered with a pane of glass.

In the tradition of Joseph Cornell, students often juxtaposed inanimate objects inside boxes during the Art Inquiry to create shrines for friends, strangers and other forces that impacted their lives.

Selected Links:

<http://www.pem.org/cornell/>

<http://americanart.si.edu/collections/interact/slideshow/cornell.cfm>

Ana Flores

Painting, Sculpture, Installation



Poetry Box, Photo from <http://library.ppld.org/blogs/ppld/index.php?m=200603&paged=2>
Biography adapted from http://www.art-farm.net/pages/ana_pages/home.htm and http://www.smokebrush.org/sp_boxes.htm

Ana Flores is a sculptor, environmentalist and community arts advocate. Born in Cuba, she now lives in southern Rhode Island and Nova Scotia, Canada. Her work is shown internationally and is in private, corporate and institutional collections throughout the United States. For twenty years she has been an artist in residence in schools, universities and public institutions. She is the co-director of Manos, an arts group working to enhance and humanize institutional spaces, and the co-founder of the Arts and Healing Program at the Rhode Island School of Design.

We were most inspired during the Art Inquiry by Ana's poetry boxes, installed as a public art project entitled *Poetry of the Wild* in collaboration with the Smokebrush Foundation for the Arts in Colorado Springs, Colorado. Previously developed in several protected sites on the East Coast, but designed to work in more urban settings as well, the project brought together visual artists, poets, and students to create decorated "poetry boxes" containing site-specific texts and interactive journals that build community relationships and an awareness of the surrounding environment. The completed boxes were installed throughout the Colorado.

Christina Bertoni

Documenting Popular Practice, Making Personal Shrines, Ceramics



Photograph from the 2005 "Shrines of Healing" altar installation, Providence City Hall

Christina Bertoni, professor of graduate studies at Rhode Island School of Design, teaches a seminar at RISD on shrine-making and sacred spaces. Bertoni received a Masters of Fine Arts degree from Cranbrook Academy of Art, and has been honored with fellowships from MacDowell Colony, National Endowment for the Arts, and Rhode Island State Council on the Arts. She has traveled throughout the United States, as well as in Nepal, Thailand, Mexico and Cuba, studying and visiting the shrines and practices of those cultures. Recently, Bertoni created a site-specific memorial enumerating the casualties of the war in Iraq at the Saylesville Friends' Meetinghouse in Lincoln, Rhode Island. She received a Masters of Fine Arts degree from Cranbrook Academy of Art, and has been honored with fellowships from MacDowell Colony, National Endowment for the Arts, and Rhode Island State Council on the Arts. She is also a ceramicist, and has lectured widely on the subject of sacred spaces and memorial practices. Christina Bertoni acted as our resident scholar during the 2007 Art Inquiry. Included in this publication is an inquiry guide developed by Bertoni for examining and understanding shrines.

MORE SHRINE-MAKING ARTISTS

Lois Anderson

<http://www.artnetwork.com/sculpture/loisanderson/index.html>

Dale Devereux Copeland

<http://dalecopeland.co.nz/default.htm>

Karen Hatzigeorgiou

<http://karenswhimsy.com/>

Roger Hines

<http://www.roomsofthemind.com/>

Leo Kaplan

<http://www.wa-digital.com/LeoKaplan/index.html>

Janice Lowry

www.janicelowry.com

Marion Martinez

<http://www.MarionMartinez.com>

Michael deMeng

<http://www.michaeldemeng.com/gallery.htm>

Opie O'Brien

<http://www.burntofferings.com/icons.htm>

Darlene Olivia McElroy

<http://www.darlenemcelroy.com/fineart/index.shtml>

Ira Ono

<http://iraono.com/collage.html>

Pepon Osorio

<http://www.artsconnected.org/artsnetmn/identity/osorio.html>

Lynne Perrella

www.lkperrella.com

Madonna Phullips

<http://www.madonnaphillips.com/>

Kay Marie Porterfield

<http://www.kporterfield.com/creativity/shrines.html>

Gayle Pritchard

http://www.gaylepritchardart.com/gal_mixed.html

Lisa Vollrath

<http://www.lisavollrath.com/paradiselost/>

BOOKS ON SHRINES, ALTARS, AND ALTERED ART

- *Crafting Personal Shrines: Using Photos, Mementos & Treasures to Create Artful Displays* by Carol Owen
- *Making Shadow Boxes and Shrines* by Kathy Cano-Murillo
- *Altars and Icons: Sacred Spaces in Everyday Life* by Jean McMann
- *Beautiful Necessity: The Art and Meaning of Women's Altars* by Kay Turner
- *Sacred Architecture: Explore and Understand Sacred Spaces* by Caroline Humphrey
- *Sacred Spaces and Other Places: A Guide to Grottos and Sculptural Environments in the Upper Midwest* by Lisa Stone and Jim Zanzi
- *Living Shrines: Home Altars of New Mexico* by Marie Romero Cash
- *A Book of Women's Altars: How to Create Sacred Spaces for Art, Worship, Solace, Celebration* by Nancy Brady Cunningham and Denise Geddes
- *Sacred Rituals: Creating Labyrinths, Sand Paintings, and Other Traditional Arts* by Belinda Recio
- *Mixed Blessings: New Art in a Multicultural America* Lucy Lippard
- *Altars: Bringing Sacred Shrines into Your Everyday Life* by Denise Linn
- *Altars Made Easy: A Complete Guide To Creating Your Own Sacred Space* by Peg Streep
- *Real Life Rituals* by Karyl Huntley
- *The Essential Joseph Cornell* by Ingrid Schaffner
- *Cabinets of Curiosities* by Patrick Mauries
- *Altered Curiosities: Assemblage Techniques and Projects* by Jane Ann Wynn
- *Secrets of Rusty Things: Transforming Found Objects into Art* by Michael Demeng
- *The Complete Guide to Altered Imagery: Mixed-Media Techniques for Collage, Altered Books, Artist Journals, and More* by Karen Michel

ONLINE SOURCES FOR TECHNIQUES, PROJECTS AND OTHER IDEAS RELATED TO SHRINE-MAKING

Pocket Shrines

<http://www.art-shrines.com/pocketshrines/how-to1.htm>

Matchbox Shrines

<http://www.hobbyloco.com/shrines.html>

Wallet Shrines

<http://craftypod.com/?p=180>

Dashboard Shrine

<http://www.chroniclebooks.com/Chronicle/excerpt/081182523X-e2.html>

Virtual Shrines

<http://www.pbs.org/speak/words/trackthatword/ttw/?i=1146>

Sound Shrine

<http://www.transom.org/shows/2005/200505.iwish.html>

Spontaneous Memorial Shrines

<http://www.temple.edu/isllc/newfolk/shrines.html>

Altered Books

<http://www.alteredbookartists.com/>

Art Cars

<http://artcarfest.com/>

Commemoration through Body Art

<http://www.amonline.net.au/bodyart/about/>

Ghost Bikes

http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ghost_bike

SHRINE INQUIRY GUIDE FOR WHEN YOU ENCOUNTER AN EXISTING SHRINE
Developed by Christina Bertoni

1. Official **name of site** and **date of visit**.
2. Location: give details of **address and directions** for future use.
3. General details of **location and orientation**.
 - Proximity to town, other neighboring sites
 - Describe the approach structures, signage, landscape, structures.
 - What direction does it face? Orient it according to the cardinal points.
4. What **natural features** are actually present to a significant degree?
Trees, rocks, stone, water, hills, valleys, woods etc. Make detailed drawings of the site. What natural features are implied, present by substitution or by symbol?
5. Make an inventory of **images** by list or photo. These may be pictures or statues.
6. Note any aspects of **threshold**. At the doorway, at various layers within the site.
7. Make careful notes and drawings of the **geometric aspects** of the place.
Look for actual and implied circles, squares, and triangles.
9. Describe the general **contents**, the various features, buildings, services, locations within the shrine area. What is the sequence physically, and in importance?
8. What **rituals** are part of it during the year? Are there particular feasts, festivals, services, processions, special populations ? What **ritual actions** are performed?
11. What was the **starting point** for the shrine to be built? Was it a healing, a vision, or in honor of something? Who started it? Who maintains it?
12. What are the features of **light**? Stained glass, candles, reflective surfaces, etc.
13. What **texts** appear to be important, inscriptions, etc.?
14. What elements of **sound** are involved? Bells, chimes, voices, music, etc.
15. Are there any **attendants** present?
16. What **smells** are involved intentionally? Incense, candles, flowers? Describe.
17. Are there any ceremonies of **touch**? Kissing a statue, etc.
18. What aspects of **altar** are present?
19. How are **offerings** given, left, indicated? Were any there?
20. Please make note of other conditions that you noticed, liked, reacted to.