

THE ART BOX PROJECT

LAUNCHES IN PALM SPRINGS BEFORE
COMING TO LAGUNA BEACH THIS SPRING

*Who Needs Wall Space When Art
Can Fit in the Palm of One's Hand?*

written by Angela Romeo

Little things come in small packages. And currently there is a movement towards small—small homes, small cars ... But smaller art?

Christine Dodd, publisher of Palm Springs ARTPatron and Laguna Beach ARTPatron, knows that art can come in small art boxes. She is poised to join the small revolution with a mixture of upcycling and contemporary art delivered through vintage vending machines.

The earliest vending machine appeared during the first century and was designed to dispense holy water. Then in the seventeenth century, tobacco vending machines appeared, and by the nineteenth century machines for newspapers began to populate the streets of London. Soon such machines were dispensing everything from postcards and cigarettes to matches and soap. The first machine in the United States was built in 1888 by the Thomas Adams Gum Company to sell gum, and in 1897 Pulver Manufacturing Company added games to vending machines. Now Dodd has added to that history by introducing art to the vending machine.

"There is an inherent fascination with vintage mechanicals," Dodd explains. "When art patrons pull that knob to release a piece of art, they are taking a leap back in time. We want people to find local art in unexpected places—restaurants, coffee shops and hotels. They don't have to seek out local arts. Instead, we are bringing the art to them in an unpretentious but engaging format.

"Art is always my first priority," the publisher continues, "and vintage vending machines are a cool delivery system for engaging a broader audience and marketplace. Whether we are opening people's eyes to the vibrant local art scene or just giving them easy access to help support local art organizations and artists, we hope that they are inspired by the Art Box Project."



Diane Morgan



Bruce Kimerer



Louisa Castrodale



Juan Manuel Alonso

Dodd reports that the response to the project has been amazing. "Artists, vintage vending machine sellers, the City of Palm Desert, Laguna College of Art & Design, the Artists Council, Palm Springs Unified School District—it seems everyone we talk to has something to add that will make this program even more effective! Some offer access to artists, or an event or venue where we can install the machines, or more exposure for the program. People seem to 'get it' immediately. It's very encouraging to work in a community that is so devoted to the arts. There is no prerequisite to participation—it's based on merit and appropriateness for this specific program."

The Art Box Project is a win for everyone—the patron, the artist and the community. Artists receive 40 percent of the gross proceeds, while 20 percent will be donated to local art nonprofits.

Palm Springs painter Bruce Kimerer is one of the first artists joining the Art Box Project. "I decided to participate because I thought it was a very original and cool idea," he remarks. "It's certain to garner a lot attention."

For his twenty Art Box pieces, Kimerer chose the theme Night & Day. "With Night & Day I'm painting the outside of the boxes a midnight blue and attaching a print of one of my night charcoal drawings to the top. Inside each box is a painted sky, and each one contains a different mini-detail archival print from my paintings."

Continues Kimerer, "I hope the Art Box Project keeps going. It would be great to have other vending machines that can handle bigger sizes, like a snack or soda machine. The possibilities are endless."

For Jeni Bates, the challenge was "finding a way to create an artwork that would fit in the box without being so small that I needed a microscope to make it—or that the buyer would need one to see it," she laughs.

Bates chose Dawn off My Back Porch as her theme. "Dawn from my back porch has become my favorite subject since moving to Salton City 13 years ago. The Salton Sea is at a critical point of collapse as an ecosystem, and if I can draw attention to this through my artwork, I will. Some of the vending machines will be located in areas where people know little about the Sea."

Bates explains that she chose strips of canvas for her pieces for two reasons—"to accommodate a bigger canvas (since they're rolled up in the boxes), and to allow the artwork to be hung on a wall with a clip or used as a bookmark."

Diane Morgan is also one of the inaugural artists. "When I first heard about this project I thought ... how fun is this! So I jumped right on it and submitted my proposal the first day," she smiles. "Besides being fun, it's a fantastic venue for local artists to get their work shown around the Valley."



eight4nine ART BOX ARTISTS

Angela Romeo, Bruce Kimerer, Charlie Ciali, Diane Morgan
Heather Sprague, Jeni Bate, Karen Riley, Juan Manuel
Louisa Castrodale, Ryan Campbell, Sofia Enriquez
Stacey Campbell, Terry Hastings, Tom Ross, Uschi Wilson

The Art Box Project is designed to help more than the artistic community. "The participating businesses displaying the art will profit from the promotion," Morgan notes. "And it's wonderful that a percentage of the proceeds will be donated to a local charity. Residents and visitors can purchase a charming little piece of work for a very minimal investment, and help a good cause."


Morgan chose to paint martini glasses. "My little paintings are all martini-related. They're varnished watercolors on watercolor board, and each one comes with its own little easel for display. The concept of presenting these pieces in old, refurbished cigarette machines is a great way to draw attention to the project and promote our local talent. Hopefully, those purchasing the works of art will like them enough to buy other pieces from the participating artists."

Palm Springs-based Stacy Campbell found the project enticing because "I knew that there were inherent problems creating artworks that small to fit in a confined space. The boxes were smaller than I thought, so I revamped my idea. My theme is based on my previous work—etched, painted, patinated abstracts and landscapes on copper—so I thought it would be a great challenge to make little jewel-like artworks using those techniques.

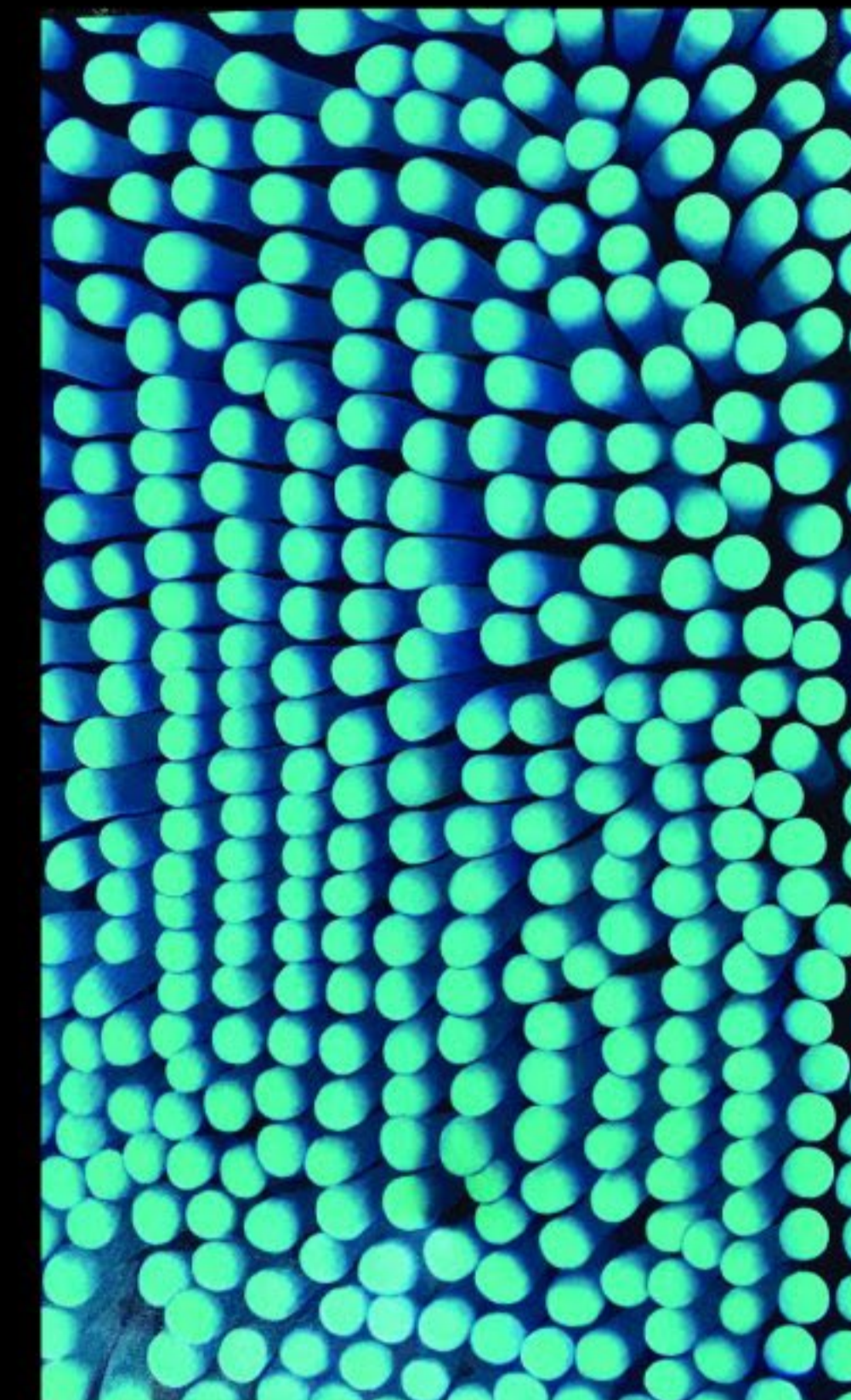
"I see the long-term effect of the project as making artworks more accessible in terms of price," Campbell continues. "I also love the idea of how the Art Boxes are dispensed. Using a cigarette machine is a marriage of old and new."

One of the first locations to receive an Art Box vending machine is Palm Springs restaurant EIGHT4NINE. Co-owner Willie Rhine noted the decision to participate in the project was easily made. "I'm very excited to be involved with this project. I love art. I love creative projects. And I love being one of the first! EIGHT4NINE is fun, bright, and very artistically designed, and it's the perfect location for a vending machine with art. Additionally we love and appreciate the opportunity to be involved with the community that embraced us."

For more information about the Art Box Project, visit artpatronmagazine.com. As Christine Dodd knows, there are other benefits to the project—education and exercise. "With this information, people may read about the artists in the machine near their location and plan their own art walk to other boxes with their favorite artists!"

Education. Exercise. Exploration. Can art get any better? 

JANSEN
ARTSPACE



MARK BROSMER

"Blue Shag"

36" x 60" / Oil on Canvas

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