




Public Art, Education, and Collaboration, with IAIN BAXTER& and the EcoArtVan (2010)

Author: Cara Said, MA (York University, 2011)

IAIN BAXTER& has had a long and influential career in Canada, characterized by an aim to change perceptions within society at large and to shed new light on everyday objects and environments. Yet, his impact has remained relatively isolated to the art world. By looking at the artist's largest project in recent years, the *EcoArtVan* (2010), it will be made evident how through pedagogical techniques, accessible media and collaboration, the project infiltrated various domains of the public sphere. In doing so, the project created new perspectives relating to the merits of artistic collaboration in education, community outreach, and public engagement. Through the dynamic relationships born out of the *EcoArtVan*, and the mobility of the van itself, the work emerges as a unique contribution to public art in Canada.

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Cara Said

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IAIN BAXTER& and The *EcoArtVan*

IAIN BAXTER& is one of the first Canadian conceptual artists to work in a variety of media reflective of social, technological and environmental changes taking place in the world around him. He has worked with found objects, plastic, bottles, outdated technologies, and an array of consumer products. He has also employed snapshot-style digital photography, used lights, video and film, and appropriated administrative methodologies of documenting and recording data. Over a period of forty-five years, BAXTER& has undertaken a number of environmental installations, performances, and emulations of bureaucratic structures; he made use of industrial, and office machines such as photocopiers and printers, and communication technologies such as faxes and scanners. He has documented trips, worked with other artists, including his wife, Louise Chance Baxter, and acted as a one-man factory through the literal production of objects such as buttons and plastic moulds. BAXTER& has also taken part in a number of activities that include teaching, operating as a curator, and an illustrator of wildlife animals, opening the Eye Scream restaurant and Cibachrome Photo Lab in Vancouver, and being a creative consultant for the Labatt Brewing Company. I will argue that these “marginal”¹ activities have contributed significantly to shaping the artist’s career. BAXTER&’s practice has always been about information. He is interested in information that connects people, and information that disrupts established patterns of thinking. The *EcoArtVan* (2010) (Figure 1) is a unique project that brought a diversity of institutions together, shifting habitual perceptions through the common bond of ecology and environmental awareness. This paper will argue that in the *EcoArtVan* each of BAXTER&’s lifelong influences and practical endeavors converged, creating a collaborative project that merged art and education, heightened levels of awareness, and opened up a variety of fresh perspectives for the individuals and organizations involved. This paper will furthermore demonstrate how the *EcoArtVan*’s address of relevant issues, accessible media, pedagogical techniques, and mobility, contributed a unique dynamic to the artistic climate of Canada. The project enabled the companies, schools, students and public audiences involved to experience alternative modes of interacting and communicating with one another, giving new relevance to artistic collaborations in the process.

The conceptual content of BAXTER&’s art is often born out of everyday observations and experiences with the natural and manmade landscape. Throughout the 1960s and 1970s there were a number of advancements in space technology, air travel, Internet, communications technologies, and video recording. Technological transformations brought about changes in perception due to the fact that individuals were presented with new ways of documenting,

¹ Domino, Christophe. “Iain Baxter: Art is all Over”. *Art Press*, 234 (1998): 50-3. 51.

storing information, communicating, and interacting with their environments. Marshall McLuhan wrote of the new global responsibility assumed by individuals in the age of electric information. With regard to community, he wrote that “Electric circuitry has overthrown the regime of ‘time’ and ‘space’ and pours upon us instantly and continuously the concerns of all other men. It has reconstituted dialogue on a global scale.”² And he wrote of global consciousness that, “there is absolutely no inevitability as long as there is a willingness to contemplate what is happening.”³ In other words, individuals must acknowledge each other, their surroundings and global occurrences in order to adapt and evolve in parallel with advancements in the world around them. As global consciousness expanded through print, radio, television and travel, a growing moral and cultural awareness developed. This led to changes in daily bureaucratic, political, and social policies, and was reflected in artistic practices of the times. Equity became a major issue in all of these fields as Eurocentric ideals were exposed for their singularity.

Philosophies of Zen Buddhism entered North America, motivating some artists to embrace an inclusive vision of the world. In a telephone conversation with BAXTER&, he remarked that artists Morris Graves and Allan Watts ignited his interest in Zen as well as his desire to pursue study in Japan. Graves was an artist from Seattle who had been to Japan and was involved with Buddhism; Watts was an American religious philosopher, and was the main figure that brought an understanding of Zen Buddhism to America. In 1961, after graduating with his first degree in Zoology from the University of Idaho, BAXTER& travelled to Japan, where he spent two years studying Fine Arts and aesthetic theory, culminating in a one-man show at the prestigious Yamada Gallery in Kyoto. Since his time in Japan BAXTER& has created art that is focused around the aesthetics of the everyday, emphasizing that art can be found anywhere. What he learned of Zen ignited his curiosity about the harmony between humans and nature, as well as the interconnectedness of all things. BAXTER& has remarked that Zen “teaches the importance of living in the moment, of caring for the environment, of the interconnectedness of all living things, and of being aware of your own and the world’s present state of being.”⁴ The ideas inherent within Zen are in some respects close to those of McLuhan. They emphasize awareness, interconnectivity, and the phenomena that connect individuals.

The 1960s and 70s saw conceptual artists in Canada using non-traditional media, which initiated the integration of art practices into everyday life. In an article accompanying the exhibition *Passing Through: IAIN BAXTER& Photographs 1958-1983*, James Patten (former Curator of Contemporary art at the Art Gallery of Windsor) wrote that,

² McLuhan, Marshall and Fiore, Quentin. *The Medium is the Massage*. Jerome Angel (Toronto, ON. 2003). 16.

³ Ibid., 24.

⁴ “No.9’s Art and Ecology Educational Program”. *No.9 Contemporary Art and the Environment*. (Accessed 2010-2011).

<[http://www.no9.ca/exhibitions/IainBaxter/ECOARTVANedguide\(email\).pdf](http://www.no9.ca/exhibitions/IainBaxter/ECOARTVANedguide(email).pdf)>.

BAXTER&'s early use of mass-communications strategies to reach a broad audience prefigured the transformative effect new technologies have had on Canadian society. He was among the first artists in Canada to use Polaroid film, faxes and computers in his work. And these new methods of communicating ideas were in part responsible for the emergence of conceptual art, which emphasized discourse and connecting with the outside world instead of the self-reflection and psychological expressiveness that had dominated abstract art in the 1950s.⁵

Conceptual artists looked to the everyday and the ordinary as a forum for critical reflection and representation. Focus thereby shifted from the art object to the artistic gesture, and BAXTER& was one of the first artists in Canada to initiate a number of unique activities that altered the way institutions perceived the relationship between art and society.

When BAXTER& returned from Japan he went on to receive a Master of Education at the University of Idaho (1962), and subsequently a Master of Fine Arts in Painting at Washington State University (1964). The same year that he graduated from Washington State, BAXTER& secured a position at the University of British Columbia. He set out to break with linear patterns of thinking by initiating alternative teaching methods in his classroom. At UBC, Marshall McLuhan's theories were becoming a focus. McLuhan had presented a range of influential lectures at the school in 1964. In 1965, BAXTER& helped to organize a cross-departmental festival devoted to McLuhan's famous phrase "The Medium is the Message." One of the earliest ways that BAXTER& managed to alter institutional perceptions was in a Fine Arts class that he taught using non-verbal techniques (Figure 2). Students were not able to communicate or ask questions verbally, which forced them to step out of their comfort zone. By acting rather than talking, they began what can now be seen as an early form of performance art. BAXTER& taught many of today's well-known Vancouver artists (including Ian Wallace and Stan Douglas). Adam Lauder works closely with BAXTER& on a daily basis as W.P. Scott Chair for Research in e-Librarianship at York University, where he is developing the online *IAINBAXTER&raisonneE*. In an interview with myself, Lauder remarked that BAXTER& was "one of the early members of a generation of artists who were also professors, who aimed to reconcile the objectives of teaching with those of artists."⁶ The act of suspending language broke free from pedagogical convention and challenged humanity's application of language, and reliance on the spoken word. The universality of gesture was in turn given heightened importance, and the ambiguity in the participants' actions invited multiple interpretations. A non-verbal lesson empowered students to be active participants, creating various interpretations of a given topic. Throughout BAXTER&'s career, the actions, reactions and interactions born out of his work are as important, if not more so, than the final art

⁵ Patten, James. "Passing Through" in *Passing Through: IAIN BAXTER& Photographs 1958-1983* ed. Lucy R. Lippard [et al.]. (Art Gallery of Windsor, Ontario, 2006).

⁶ Lauder, Adam. "Interview with Cara Said". (March 16, 2011).

object produced, because the act and the idea carry the potential to alter stagnant perceptions.

Another pioneering gesture of BAXTER&'s was his decision to operate under a corporate identity. In 1966, BAXTER& founded the N.E. THING CO. LTD.⁷ Known as the N.E. Baxter Thing Co. until late 1967, NETCO was legally incorporated in January 1969, with his then wife Ingrid acting as Co-President until 1978. This act of corporatization was entirely new to the art world; it stirred up established notions regarding the relationship between the artist and the institution, and the artwork versus the action or mundane object. By becoming incorporated, IAIN BAXTER& raised questions about the role of the artist in society. NETCO emphasized that artists are not detached from daily life, that artists can be active citizens who communicate ideas through production (such as the Company's own self-publication of picture books, opening of a restaurant and photo lab, and its self-funding of excursions, performances and environmental exhibitions). NETCO set out to give new life to the situations and things one encounters on a daily basis. The Company focused its attention on the details of everyday life, aiming to re-instate wonder into the mundane or commonplace landscape. NETCO's intention was to "generate funds by legitimate, highly imaginative and profitable business activity, in areas like food, clothing, shelter, leisure and consultation, so as to support and accomplish the projects and concepts it wishes to conceive."⁸ By assuming a corporate identity BAXTER& found ways of generating his own revenue, escaping a reliance on the financial support of individuals and institutions. The position statement of the N.E. THING CO. declared, "It is essential to free the artist from [financial] constraints, and allow the cultural knowledge he possesses to fuse with that of business, politics, and education."⁹ This statement, written in 1971, points to the Company's early intention of blurring the boundaries between the conventions of artistic practice and sociological structures. The Company was interested in conveying 'Visual Sensitivity Information' rather than 'Art' because the term was more accessible to the public. The Company labeled the objects which were photographed in a documentary style as either ARTs or ACTs. (ARTs were Aesthetically Rejected Things, and ACTs were Aesthetically Claimed Things.) The Company was interested in ACTs; its personnel went around documenting all sorts of sensitivity information from daily landscapes that they found to be of interest. By creating art that addressed issues from daily life and by using accessible media, the N.E.THING CO. offered an alternative approach for experiencing, and relating to environments, which broke down the elitism of the arts.

⁷ The N.E. Thing Co. was the name of Iain and Ingrid Baxter's Canadian art collective that operated between the years 1967-1978 in Vancouver, B.C. They became seminal figures in the emergence of the conceptual art movement in Canada during the late sixties. The N.E. Thing Co. used corporate strategies to generate and frame its artistic practice.

⁸ Baxter, Iain, et al. *You are Now in the Middle of a N.E. Thing Co. Landscape : Works by Iain and Ingrid Baxter, 1965-1971*. (Vancouver: UBC Fine Arts Gallery, 1993). 43.

⁹ Ibid., 43.

Many of the scenarios that were documented or enacted by the N.E.THING CO. highlighted change in natural and man-made environments. They reflected the advancements occurring in technology, industry, and commerce, as well as a growing concern for the natural environment, and a nostalgia for nature. As developments in transportation progressed, more time was being spent in transit. Travel and tourism had led to the development of heavily mediated landscapes, and technology furthered indoor leisure and entertainment activities. Encounters with nature were becoming less frequent, and humanity's impact on nature was growing parallel to an indulgence in excess and consumer culture. The relationship between humans and nature was being explored through a genre of art referred to as Land Art or Earthworks. In Vancouver, as early as the sixties artists with a desire to escape the confines of the gallery began creating works that fell under these categories. Some artists from this time who are known and collected are Joseph Beuys, Mel Chin, Agnes Denes, Helen and Newton Harrison, Robert Smithson, Christo and Jeanne-Claude, and Alan Sonfist. Early earthworks were generally site-specific and often involved major interventions within the landscape. They conveyed the relationship between man and nature, or more commonly humanity's domination over nature. Beth Carruthers expressed that, "far from embodying sensitivity to, or awareness of, bioregional complexity, much Land Art of the 1960s and 70s involved what we now recognize as tremendous imposition on local ecosystems"¹⁰. In his early career BAXTER& embarked on Earthworks such as digging a hole in the ground, filling it with paint and then photographing it to demonstrate human intervention in nature. A more recent perception of how contemporary individuals interact with nature is visible in the video installation *One Canada Video* (1992), from the *Products, Place & Phenomenon* exhibition at the Art Gallery of Windsor (1996). BAXTER& and his wife, artist Louise Chance Baxter, videotaped every mile of the Trans-Canada Highway, from east to west coast, and exhibited the footage projected onto the interior windshield of a van that was placed inside the gallery. People could come and sit in the vehicle to experience the landscape, thereby emphasizing how many Canadians encounter nature solely through the windows of cars, or through film. With photography and video, artists who were interested in Land Art were able to bring nature back into the gallery setting. Some of the above-mentioned artists did this in a more literal fashion by bringing stones, earth or branches into the white cube, thus challenging its sterile image. Such works demonstrated displacement. They both emphasized the various ways humans have displaced nature for their own personal gain, and in turn encourage the displacement of traditional (and canonical) thinking patterns.

BAXTER&'s vision of changing landscapes and the imposition of the man-made in nature is portrayed in the exhibition *Passing Through: IAIN BAXTER& Photographs* (2007) (Figures 3). Audiences are presented with photographs taken over twenty-five years of BAXTER&'s early career. The photographs

¹⁰ Carruthers, Beth. "MAPPING THE TERRAIN OF CONTEMPORARY ECOART PRACTICE AND COLLABORATION: ART in ECOLOGY - A THINK TANK ON ARTS AND SUSTAINABILITY". *UNESCO*, (Vancouver, BC. April 27, 2006). 6.

document decades when Canadians were experiencing the above-mentioned environmental and social changes. The images portray everyday subject matter through a snapshot aesthetic with a serial and repetitive nature that highlights consumer culture, daily life, landscapes, corporate patterns of behavior, and ecological issues. Together, the photographs raise an awareness of the implications of our actions as a society. In the images, social organization, natural and man-made environments, and communications technologies are represented through the presence of telephone wires and poles, advertisements, consumer products, new and dilapidated architecture, people and tourist sites. Since the beginning of his career BAXTER&, has maintained a strong interest in the adaptation of nature to suit human development as well as changes within daily environments that reflect adaptation to new modes of documentation and communication. Paired with these are his interests in animal life and ecology, and the profound effect humanity's actions have on the natural world. BAXTER& has used photography throughout his career as a means of communicating ideas and documenting changes in the surrounding landscape. The accessibility of the medium (digital photography being available to practically all individuals) had a profound effect on how humans experienced, recorded, and understood the world. The photograph was a global medium and a universal language.

BAXTER&'s use of photography has been pioneering. He has explored the possibilities of Polaroid and digital cameras extensively. Creating snapshot-style photographs was another way that BAXTER& challenged established artistic hierarchies. There is as much to be said through a high contrast, out of focus, irregularly framed, or mundane image as there is in a photograph whose content and formal structure are carefully edited and controlled. Conceptual artists' low-quality images left room for the viewer to insert their own imaginings. Literally filled with minimal data, these images ignited questioning rather than conveying statements. Jayne Wark, Professor of Art History at the Nova Scotia College of Art and Design has stated that,

The premise that photography achieved the status of art when it began to be used by conceptual artists c. 1967-75 is now widely accepted. Conceptual artists valued photography as the 'artless mass medium' of commerce, documentation, reportage, and information, and they deployed its indexical, referential, and amateurish aspects to ends that aimed to supersede the high-modernist aesthetic values of transcendence and autonomy."¹¹

Audiences had to insert their own imaginings into these photographs, consider the artists' use of the medium, and the message imbued through that application. What was the artist trying to convey by exhibiting a photograph that was of amateur style as art? The answer to this may have been found in the social

¹¹ Wark, Jayne. "'Serious Art Is Only Made in Black and White': Photography and Conceptual Art in Canada". Lecture series. *Concordia University*. (Accessed March 19, 2011).
< <http://speakingofphotography.concordia.ca/index.php/2010-2011/photography-and-conceptual-art>>

phenomenon of the handheld mass-marketed camera. Upon its emergence, it turned the everyday individual into a recorder of history, in control of their own expression, and documentation of the world as they experienced it. Consumers became producers of their own art and history. The photograph visualizes (technically) and conveys (through documentation) technological and industrial advancements that have occurred since its invention. The personal use of cameras contributed to the explosion of an accumulation of visual information around the globe.

In a telephone conversation with BAXTER&, he claimed that McLuhan was the reason he wanted to start making art about information. In a time of increasing consumer culture, production, and waste, McLuhan's theories on media as extensions of the human senses, the controlling and empowering effects of 'hot' and 'cool' media, and the negative and positive effects of the 'global-village', provided a theoretical basis for artists addressing the shifting social, political, environmental, and cultural climate of the world. McLuhan began as an English professor, but his train of thought shifted in parallel with revolutions in media technology. He abandoned linear ways of perceiving, understanding, recording, and experiencing information, claiming that consciousness was now global and simultaneous. Television, the written word, radio, all of these media brought about the circulation of information on a global scale. The notion that there could be a linear, right or wrong way of knowing and experiencing things was no longer appropriate. McLuhan explored the technical, environmental, and psychological effects of television and other electronic media, some of which were hot (augmenting a singular sense in high definition), overwhelming the viewer into passivity, while others were cool (isolating one sense in low definition), allowing the viewer to actively fill in the rest of the information. A photograph is 'hot', containing a lot of visual data, while a cartoon is 'cool' with little visual information¹². McLuhan preferred 'cool' media, since they allow for maximum participation and creativity. He addressed the effects of 'hot' media on the individual, comparing them to a psychological censor to our "structures of awareness."¹³ Movies (hot) provide the viewer with the complete story, beginning, middle, and end; unlike television (cool), which leaves one wondering what will happen next or off-screen. A better example is a lecture that numbs the audience into acceptance of the information provided, whereas a seminar requires participation. Cool media audiences can engage audiences and awaken their senses, inspiring audience members to wonder, question, and even to play. Conceptual artists using photography transformed their images into 'cool' media by abandoning traditional formal technique.

Media are literally a sign of their times. Uses of media speak to who we are as individuals and as a culture. In a work called *A Sign of the Times* (2003), BAXTER& created an installation in Barrie, Ontario that, appropriately, was a large backlit sign. In this project the artist's famous word play is combined with

¹² McLuhan, Marshall. *Understanding Media : The Extensions of Man*. (Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press, 1994). 24

¹³ *Ibid.*, 25.

his use of media that are representative of the cultural climate of the surrounding area and time period. The dominant medium here is the backlit sign that one encounters daily at gas stations and in roadside advertisements. But there are two other media in this work that are reflective of their times, and that connect individuals in a global sense: photography and the mirror. BAXTER&'s work attempts to address the culture and geography of Barrie as a city whose history consists of an ongoing fusion between land and water. In this photographic work, BAXTER&, in two images, holds an oval hand mirror in a position so as to reflect man-made environments across the water, or on the edge of the park leading up to the water. Within these images, daily life, culture, industrialization and nature merge. BAXTER& writes that, "Photography is the one all-pervasive documentary medium that everyone uses, relates to, and understands in our daily lives. The mirror is the one common device we all use that allows the viewer to reflect on his/her person, surroundings or thoughts."¹⁴ Influenced by McLuhan, BAXTER& has maintained a belief in the power of media to communicate ideas and information. Media are important indicators of a time or cultural shift and they demonstrate globalization. The mirror, photography, plastic, and the stuffed animal are examples of media that BAXTER& has used in depth.

The invention of plastic affected life on a global scale. In the sixties, plastic played an important role for BAXTER& and other artists who began exploring its possibilities as an artistic medium. Artists used this functional material to challenge, in Christophe Domino's words, "the material identity of a work of art."¹⁵ There is a fascinating duality to plastic, which is at once a cheap product, but also an innovative invention. Around 1964, Baxter gained access to an industrial vacuum thermoform machine. He began to create plastic moulds of common objects. The machine allowed him to assume the role of a personal factory mass-producing objects of the lowest value at a fast rate. In a similar fashion as Pop and Land Art, a work such as *Still Life, 4 Blue Bottles* (1965) (Figure 4) challenged the high nature of fine art by bringing a low-quality mould of a mundane item into the gallery setting. At the same time a work such as this drew attention to humanity's reliance on mass-produced products. Plastic broke down a lot of barriers with regards to affordable living, but has also had a negative environmental impact. In the gallery setting, plastic can be seen to embody a playful and ironic dig at the connoisseurial values of 'high' art through the nature of its virtual indestructibility. As an item that does not easily decompose, BAXTER&'s plastic moulds emulate the timeless nature of classical sculpture. What is made in plastic will linger on this earth as a sort of monument to contemporary culture: a legacy of mass-production, cheap products, and pollution. The ability to mass-produce plastic items, however, reflects the efficiency and instantaneity of modern times, in contrast to the time-consuming, intricate quality of an object of fine art or craft. It is through his use of media and careful attention to everyday environments that BAXTER& connects to audiences. He thereby creates art that is relevant to its time and accessible to

¹⁴ Baxter, Iain. "A Sign of the Times", in *Shore/lines*, 58-59. (Barrie, ON: MacLaren Art Centre, 2003).

¹⁵ Domino. "Art is all Over". 52.

the public, while still challenging institutional frameworks.

By addressing the changing climate of the world around him, certain BAXTER& projects have taken on a didactic and pedagogical nature. Through observation and documentation, his work conveys information that affects individuals on a daily basis and connects individuals globally, while shedding light on the past and anticipating the future. One of McLuhan's phrases that BAXTER& likes to cite and communicate to others claims that the function of the artist "in recent decades [...] is, above all, to prevent us from becoming adjusted to our environments. The job of the artist is to upset all the senses and thus provide new vision and new powers of adjusting to and relating to new situations."¹⁶ While BAXTER&'s art gives new life to ordinary objects, there have been times when audiences were left more confused than inspired; for instance, the 1969 "Environment" exhibition at the National Gallery of Canada. The N.E.THING CO. transformed an entire level of the gallery space into bureaucratic offices, with secretaries, a president's office and telephones. "People would come in and they would go back out and look to see if they were in the National Gallery. It was a total change of art for them.' As part of a photo-documentation project, Baxter recorded the bewilderment."¹⁷ BAXTER&'s early career, actions, and artworks have all had an influential impact on altering perceptions in the artistic field. However, some of his work has not escaped the classroom, and art world settings.

The *EcoArtVan* was one BAXTER& project that succeeded in breaking down many of these barriers to access. It was an art project that opened up dynamic collaborations between The Toronto District School Board, the Art Gallery of Ontario, Toronto Public Libraries, the World Wildlife Fund, and the city of Toronto. The project enabled perceptions of art education and public discourse alike to shift by way of using art as a means for communicating relevant issues within a community as well as through the van's mobility, which allowed it to travel into various public domains. The project demonstrated a shift occurring within established educational policies and social/community-based activity. Technological advancements continue to accelerate at a brisk pace and the contemporary individual (student or adult) is constantly adapting to new ways of learning, accessing, storing, and communicating information. The *EcoArtVan* provided another way of communicating ideas in a public forum, and through its pedagogical nature it promoted and facilitated change in various civic domains.

The *EcoArtVan* was a mobile ecology museum. It was a four-walled cube van with glass walls containing an installation by IAIN BAXTER& that was commissioned from No.9 Contemporary Art and the Environment. The dominant medium in this installation was the stuffed animal, which has been used by BAXTER& since the 1990s. Another medium is found in the vehicle itself as a mobile museum. This work brings art out of the gallery, and education around the city, thereby creating ties between public sectors and promoting awareness

¹⁶ McLuhan, Marshall. *Understanding Me: Lectures and Interviews* ed. McLuhan, Stephanie and Staines, David. (McClelland & Stewart Lt.: The Canadian Publishers, Toronto, ON, 2003). 223.

¹⁷ Malone, Judith. *Key Works From the Sixties by Vancouver Artist Iain Baxter* in "Iain Baxter: file of miscellaneous uncatalogued material". *AGO Research Library and Archives*. Artist file.

about ecological issues. The mobility of the van allowed it to travel to its audience, to bring art into non-art contexts, and to reach a diversity of viewers that may not have already had a relationship with art. The project was created with the intention of visiting elementary schools from the Model Schools for Inner Cities. These schools are part of a Toronto District School Board Program that aims to develop innovative teaching and learning practices within schools in communities with limited economic opportunity and social support¹⁸. No.9 Contemporary Art and the Environment is a charitable organization that supports artists dealing with environmental issues to create ambitious works of art in the public sphere. No. 9 operates with the intention of raising environmental awareness through temporary art installations, thereby demonstrating the merits of art as an alternative means for communicating important issues. Public art is No. 9's vehicle for interacting with wide and diverse audiences. As a charitable organization No. 9 operates with educational goals and in the interest of heightening environmental awareness as well as a knowledge of contemporary art and artists in Canada. To satisfy its educational mandate, No. 9's exhibitions are accompanied by educational projects such as artist talks, film presentations, and symposia. There was a shared desire amongst all the partners involved with the *EcoArtVan* to make connections between science, art, and social studies. No.9 operates to achieve one of the "major goals of the Ontario Ministry of Education's Science and Technology Program, to 'relate science and technology to society and the environment.'"¹⁹ No.9 and IAIN BAXTER& created an educational program that catered to the Science curriculum in the *Understanding Life Systems* strand: *Habitats and Communities* in grade four classrooms. The program, in No.9's words, "aims to reinforce keen observational skills, fearless imagination, holistic thinking patterns and creative problem solving".²⁰ The goals of No.9, Model Schools, and BAXTER& all share the common bond of a desire to heighten awareness, empower creative thinking and to break down barriers of linear experience and learning.

The *EcoArtVan* enabled institutions to expand their standard practice through a pedagogical, creative, interactive, and hands-on experience with art. There were eight works in the van: *OVER & OUT* (Figure 5), *SKEWERED* (Figure 6), *GREEN SWEEP* (Figure 6), *ZERO EMISSIONS* (Figure 6), *SHIPPED OUT* (Figure 7, 8), *ANIMAL PRESERVE* (Figure 9), *Heads you win, tails...* (Figure 10), and *EXTINCTION?* (Figure 11). *OVER & OUT* is a series of vacuum packed animals that were mounted onto the front wall of the van interior. They were mounted in a grid pattern recalling formats of scientific study and preservation. The vacuum pack emulates non-perishable food items, and mass-produced consumer products. The animals in these vacuum packs, however, are all in danger of becoming extinct and their packaging alludes to humanity's role in that process. The work projected an eerie feeling through the knowledge that animals are perishable and this form of preservation is not sufficient and that the

¹⁸ "Model Schools for Inner Cities". *Toronto District School Board*. (Accessed January 14, 2011). <http://www.tdsb.on.ca/_site/ViewItem.asp?siteid=263&menuid=2370&pageid=1871>

¹⁹ No.9. "No.9's Art and Ecology". 4.

²⁰ *Ibid.*, 4.

pollution produced by mass-marketed consumer products is part of the problem leading to the endangerment of these animals. Nestled amidst these animals was the work *GREEN SWEEP*, a vacuum packed paintbrush whose bristles have been dipped in green paint. The work emphasizes that the world needs a green sweep. Each of the students that took part in the *Art and Ecology Educational Program* took a portrait with their adopted animal, and this paintbrush hung around their neck. *SKEWERED*, *ZERO EMISSIONS*, and *SHIPPED OUT* each appeared in an exhibition at the Corkin Gallery in 2009 entitled *IAIN BAXTER& and*. The Gallery described these works in the exhibition catalog thus:

Zero Emissions is an installation of nine 12' high, stainless steel mufflers, clamped with oversized fluorescent vices and topped with a different taxidermy vertebrate. This intervention acts as a metaphorical plug to the exhaust, creating an ominous reminder of the impact car dependency has on the natural world. In both *Shipped Out* and *Skewered Species* large, plush, brightly-coloured carnival toys are tightly packed and bound in a cube, or stacked and skewered on a spear. The stuffed animals recall both a childhood fascination with the animal kingdom and the more pressing reality of climate change and species degradation.²¹

In the van, there were two mufflers from *Zero Emissions*, one with a raccoon and the other, a fish. These works point to how pollution can displace animals by altering their natural habitats. *Shipped Out* and *Skewered Species* speak to globalization, import and export of animals, and hunting. The juxtaposition of manmade restraints, packaging, and deadly objects with stuffed animals alludes to how some humans disregard animal life as inferior. The work also suggests that the human drive for economic and technological advancement that can lead to a denial of the important role played by human society in maintaining the balance of ecosystems in the world. *ANIMAL PRESERVE* originally appeared in *Products, Place & Phenomenon*. It is well-known and highly circulated work consisting of many jars, each stuffed with a different brightly coloured stuffed animal distilled in clear liquid. The jars are stacked on top of each other on a metal shelving unit. This display recalls what one would expect to encounter in cabinets of curiosities or a herpetological or mammological museum. The work provokes reflection on how humans interact with, and think about, animals on a daily basis. The sentiment conveyed by the work is that if individuals do not acknowledge and take responsibility for the effects of their actions on the world, this type of display may become the only available way to encounter animals in the future. BAXTER& remarked that this work "states the concerns very well because it caused quite a bit of tension with the general public when it was

²¹ "IAIN BAXTER& and". *Corkin Gallery* (accessed November 1, 2008).
<<http://www.corkingallery.com/?q=node/166>>

shown and it gets people thinking right away.”²² *Heads you win, tails ...* takes three of the individual jars of preserved stuffed animals and inserts them inside three sparkling green skulls. Finally, *EXTINCTION?* is a large stuffed animal tiger with a smaller stuffed tiger preserved in a jar between his two front paws. BAXTER& reminded me on the phone that his personal and artistic motto is ‘Love, Play, Wonder, &.’ There is an ambivalence in all of his works that creates a space where these words come into play. The *EcoArtVan* works are focused on issues of ecology and animal habitat; their ambiguity enters through the intermingling of aesthetic allure and sincere apprehension. Bright colours, familiar, and cute objects draw you in by invoking a sense of play and humor; stuffed animals elicit a familiar feeling of love for animals. The quasi-scientific organization of these objects, however, ignites trepidation prompting wonder, questioning, and reflection. Tender feelings one may have felt for the animals quickly turns into concern, and an energy that stimulates a desire to do something. When it comes to the environment, BAXTER& does not deny an interest in motivating individuals to carry what they have experienced through the artwork into the world to make some sort of change. His perception of how people will encounter animals in the future is highly influenced by his time spent in zoology museums. He uses the stuffed animal as a representation of the general sense of awareness with which humans perceive animal life. Stuffed animals are a global symbol of tenderness, childhood, and the way in which humans idolize nature.

The stuffed animal creates an entry point for audiences interacting with the *EcoArtVan*. This entry point can evoke nostalgic memories of a toy, a pet, a gift, or experience in nature. As such the stuffed animal is conducive to feelings of love, and when used as a means for communicating sincere issues relating to the endangerment of species, it has the ability to provoke strong reactions. In an interview with Leah Sandals, BAXTER& speculated that stuffed animals are a prime example of the way in which nature is revered in contemporary society²³. Yet, if one considers how humans interact with animals on a daily basis, it is most commonly in a domestic or agricultural setting. Animals are encountered in highly mediated environments in the same manner that wilderness is rarely encountered without some level of human intervention in the landscape (trails, pit stops, tourist shops). In a domestic setting, children treasure their stuffed animals, and adults want to hang paintings of idealized, untouched Canadian landscapes on their walls, yet very few stop to consider the vulnerable reality of that natural world outside their homes. Human actions have affected the natural world and animal life in a harmful way. Children do not realize that many of the living versions of their stuffed animals are endangered species, and many adults are in denial about the way in which untouched landscapes are disappearing. In the *EcoArtVan*, stuffed animals become a sign of the times by drawing attention to the highly-mediated environments in which we live. The manufactured image

²² No.9. “No.9’s Art and Ecology.” 14.

²³ Sandals, Leah. “Questions & Artists IAIN BAXTER&’s pretty Green Machine”. *The National Post*, April 19 2010. (Accessed December 2010). <<http://neditpasmoncoeur.blogspot.com/2010/04/now-zen-earth-day-interview-with-iaain.html>>.

of nature in the home connects back to the nostalgia for nature that was born out of modernization. BAXTER&'s installation forces the individual to consider their place in nature as encountered in settings such as zoos and national parks, or the destruction of animal habitats through industrialization, forestry, oil, and tourism. There are stuffed animals in nearly any genre of store one enters into; animals are used in a promotional sense for large corporations, in charitable campaigns, and are one of the most common gifts given to children. Animals can also come in the form of a mascot representing bureaucratic patterns of branding and are often sold in souvenir shops representing the identity of a country as the national animal. Stuffed animals are often cheaply made and are the epitome of mass production. The stuffed animal not only connects individuals on a global scale, it defines temporal markers as a cherished item that has existed in domestic settings over centuries. New life is given to the stuffed animal by BAXTER& through placement of it in a scenario that conveys a solemn warning, and heightened awareness arises out of an acknowledgement of the dangers of human intervention into natural landscapes.

The van itself can be seen as an intervention into the landscape; however, as a bio-diesel van it does not produce harmful emissions. The mobility of the van allows it to operate in the public sphere encountering an array of audiences that may be artistically initiated or un-initiated, expecting or un-expecting. By addressing relevant issues, the van facilitates accessibility. The van presents issues in an accessible manner for individuals to take what they will from their interaction with the work. Understanding is also supported through the presence of the No.9 educators. The accessibility of public art is important as it is intended to generate dialogue and open up public forums for cultivating communication on relevant issues within the surrounding community. It is important to differentiate, however, between public art that is activist in a destructive manner, and public art that aims to communicate. While adult audiences are experienced enough to moderate the level to which they are affected by the work, the young students may be more easily influenced. As mentioned above, however, BAXTER& does not deny a desire to inspire audiences to take their own action. In a CBC cover story, BAXTER& claimed that he incorporated a handle on the top of the van to indicate that individuals can "carry all of these ideas with [them] and go out into society and do something", in BAXTER&'s words the van becomes "a container to carry these ideas with them into the future".²⁴ The van also creates change in another sense, one that is not solely focused around ecological issues. Through its material fabrication it presents alternative patterns of thought from which alternative perceptions of daily activity and social interaction may arise. Artistically-fueled forums of debate can therefore be seen as important forms of public interaction and empowerment.

Jürgen Habermas, a German critical theorist, has argued that the public sphere emerged in eighteenth-century Europe as a stage for critical public debate. He describes a shift from what he refers to as "representational culture" (where the public was passive, dominated by governmental influence) to "public

²⁴ Kelly, Mark. "Connect.With Mark Kelly". *CBC News*. (Accessed 23 April 2010).
<<http://www.cbc.ca/connect/2010/04/eco-art-van.html>>

culture,” which was an inherently critical, active culture where parties exchanged views and knowledge, and individuals were no longer passive. In parallel with these developments, art became one of the media of public expression. Habermas’s main concern in *The Structural Transformation of the Public Sphere* (1962) is to expose what he regards as the deceptive nature of free institutions in the West through the influence of representational culture. Institutions throughout history have often shaped the way that populations perceive other cultures, or how they act on a daily basis. Until the emergence of public culture, these systems of legitimation had not been questioned. They were passively accepted as the norm. In parallel with the rise of public culture a new risk of violent acts of demonstration and protest emerged. Habermas differentiates between what he terms “strategic” and “communicative” actions. In Habermas’s words, the difference between the two actions is that “in strategic actions one actor seeks to influence the behaviour of another by means of the threat of sanctions or the prospect of gratification in order to cause the interaction to continue as the first actor desires”.²⁵ Strategic action is oriented towards domination and is thus repressive and manipulative, while communicative actions are oriented around understanding, allowing the participants to be active contributors. To map Habermas’s concepts onto McLuhan’s framework, “hot” media contain a higher capacity to foster strategic actions through the bombardment of information. Consider advertising, or animal rights activist campaigns such as PETA: high-resolution images carrying a serious or strategic message have the ability to shock the viewer into submission, or to turn them away completely. An approach to communication, that empowers the audience to participate, experience, and learn, without imposing an answer or singular opinion is much more effective.

We have seen how BAXTER&’s careful selection of media allows for heightened accessibility and engagement between the audience and the work, demonstrating that art can serve as a useful outlet for communication, learning, and addressing issues that are relevant to a wide diversity of individuals. By addressing issues that reflect the cultural climate of a geographical location or population, art also has the ability to engage different constituents or institutions through a common interest. In the case of the *EcoArtVan*, this shared interest is in environmental awareness and education. What these institutions could not have anticipated, however, was how the project would impact their own vision of themselves, and the role they play in society. In *Public Art: Thinking Museums Differently*, Hilde Hein writes that, “art has the power to affect the world by transforming perceptions of it. [... Public art’s] implicit sociality renders those originally private perception collective.”²⁶ Habermas and Hein both believe that the assumption that one’s audience and public are passive is detrimental to the advancement of the arts in contemporary times. Public art is seen in a contemporary context as lessening the distance between art and the public, breaking down hierarchies and linear modes of perception. Its aim is to speak to all individuals and bring them together. Hilde Hein observed that,

²⁵ Barber, Bruce. “Cultural Interventions in the Public Sphere” in *Public art in Canada: critical perspectives*, ed. James S. McLean, and Annie Gérin, 170. (University of Toronto Press, 2009). 170.

²⁶ Hein, Hilde S. *Public Art: Thinking Museums Differently*. (Lanham, MD : Altamira Press, 2006). xviii.

This merging symbolizes a new perception and attitude towards collaboration, mutual illumination, and understanding. It repudiates the hierarchical structures of a society that ‘talks down’ to people and purports to educate them by ‘filling up’ empty cavities with prescribed lessons.²⁷

Each individual in the public sphere brings varying cultural, historical, religious or political backgrounds. This creates a space containing a diversity of interpretations. If those interpretations are cultivated, voiced, and acknowledged (through activities and discussion) then they begin to contribute to the widening of equity, inclusiveness and democracy in contemporary society. The *EcoArtVan* cultivated an amalgamation of varying perspectives through the diversity of projects, companies, and interactions that make up its framework.

In an increasingly digital world, the *EcoArtVan* offered an interactive and visual approach to communication and learning that was brought into the classroom. The setting for this portion of the project was fourth grade classrooms in Model Schools. The educational program, which employed methods of interactive and hands-on learning, was called the *No.9 Art and Ecology Educational Program*. It consisted of an introduction to BAXTER&'s art and ideas (through images and discussion of his previous work); an introduction to landscape painting and to other artists dealing with environmental issues; a lesson in watercolour techniques; and a painting workshop (Figure 12) where the students created a representation of their endangered animal's habitat. The WWF donated stuffed animals to students in all of the Grade Four classes which participated in the project, through the donation of animal adoption kits for the students (Figure 13). Each kit came with a stuffed animal of an endangered species. Baxter commented thus: “I think that gives kids a different kind of consciousness about environmental issues. If they hang onto it, it's almost become a little sacred thing.”²⁸ Here sacred refers to the lingering effect of the experience on the children, and to the likelihood that this is the only way that children will even come into contact with their animal. Either way, having something to carry with them outside the classroom, to take home and to discuss with parents, or friends, has a ripple effect within society that reaches beyond the students themselves. The workshop integrated science, ecology, and visual art by employing a variety of instructional strategies such as “class discussion, brainstorming, demonstrations, an art slideshow, group work, a visit to the *EcoArtVan* art installation, and hands-on art making activities with concrete materials and student presentations.”²⁹ These methods were used to engage all of the students. With their paintings the students were encouraged to incorporate an outline of their own hands, creating a *H&scape* (Figure 14), which

²⁷ Ibid., xxii.

²⁸ Sandals. “Questions & Artists”.

²⁹ Van Geest, Pearl. “No.9's IAIN BAXTER& EcoArtVan Educational Program: Project Final Report,” June 2010. *No.9 Contemporary Art and the Environment*, 16.
<<http://www.no9.ca/exhibitions/IainBaxter/ECOARTVANedguide.pdf>>

demonstrated their connection to their animal's habitat. This aspect of connection to the outside world, and acknowledging that connection, is important to BAXTER&. He has emphasized connectivity through the ampersand that he has had incorporated into his name, and through the tattoo of ampersands on his two hands. David Moos describes BAXTER&'s connection to the ampersand and the environment stating that,

IAIN BAXTER& has always made art about the environment. How we picture our landscape determines how we use our land. His art and photographs make us aware of who we are and how we fit into the cycle of life. For BAXTER& art is a system – a way of seeing that makes us think. His art shows us that we have a role to play. For him there is no difference between the natural world and ourselves: we are one interconnected body. That is the meaning of AND in his name – it connects the artist to the world, art & nature. & ...³⁰

The presence of the students' hands in their artworks was an extension of the idea that each individual plays a role in shaping the world around them. What was unique about the educational package created for this project was that it allowed teachers and students to learn the content of these lessons through different media, media that engaged the senses, visual media - art. Teachers also witnessed a new approach to education that altered their perceptions of traditional educational procedures. In surveys, conducted by No.9 after the project, it was found that many teachers believed their curriculum and their approach to teaching was opened up by the integration of arts into science, and other programs of study such as language, and even social justice. In a letter made available to me by Andrew Davies (executive director at No.9), Model Schools for Inner Cities expressed the benefits of the collaboration for their staff (over 70 TDSB teachers), as well as for the enriched Grade Four curriculums. Vicky Branco lauded the organization of the program and the relevance of the project to the students. She wrote, "students were able to participate in hands on activities encouraging them to develop their role as active global citizens."³¹ The educators' perceptions of the merits of art integration shifted, as did the students' perceptions of their surrounding community, and the important role they play within that environment.

The installation in the van was discussed with regards to its medium, and the cultural phenomena that its content explores. What I would like to consider now is the social and cultural impact of the van itself, the mobile museum, and the public artwork. The project was launched in conjunction with Earth day, on April 1 and travelled the city until May 31. The van was parked in school playgrounds (Figure 15), and library parking lots across the Greater Toronto Area. It spent two days at a time in each location, accompanied by a No.9

³⁰ No.9. "No.9's Art and Ecology". 17.

³¹ Branco, Vicky. "Correspondence with Andrew Davies," Model Schools for Inner Cities. *No.9 Feedback File*, 3 (June 24, 2010).

educator, Pearl Van Geest, who helped prompt discussion and facilitate interaction between audiences and the artwork. It visited twenty-six schools and eight libraries (Figure 16), also visiting Toronto City Hall.

In conversation with IAIN BAXTER&, he commented on the presence of public art in Canada stating that, “I just wish in our country that public art would take hold the way it has in America. It’s so strange that civilizations don’t realize that there’s nothing that tells you what a country’s about better than its culture. Tell the politicians that it doesn’t hurt to give more to culture!”³² BAXTER& identifies the *EcoArtVan* as a unique project and one of his major works in recent years. He knew immediately when he was approached that he wanted to take part in No. 9’s venture, likely because it was a wide-reaching, collaborative, and public project.

BAXTER& is, however, right to be skeptical about the state of public art in Canada. The forms of public art likely encountered by most individuals are murals, memorials, sculptural installations commissioned as part of major building contracts as well as major festivals such as Nuit Blanche (Environmental or Land art might also fall in here, but such projects are often sited in remote locations). Murals, memorials, and bureaucratic commissions in Canada are stationary, and isolated examples of public art. They have the potential to become part of the fabric of the city that goes unnoticed as individuals pursue the routine of their day. Nuit Blanche has had some success in engaging audiences, but there are debates throughout the art world as to its effectiveness as a critical and “public” forum. It is certainly positive that there is such a large public art event in Canada; however, the issues addressed are not always relevant to the context and history of the geographic locations, or to the inhabitants of those areas. Early on in this paper, Land Art and Earthworks in Canada were acknowledged, and they have today evolved into a more environmentally-friendly genre commonly referred to as EcoArt. While EcoArt has become a dominant form of public art around the world today, in Canada, it only tends to exist on a very local and small scale.³³ The *EcoArtVan*, on the other hand, breaks down accessibility barriers by driving to its audiences. At the same time, it opens up for BAXTER& new areas for interaction between the public, institutions and art. These new areas emerge in the school playgrounds, library parking lots, and other frequented public spaces.

One of the major goals of public art or new genre public art is, in Suzanne Lacy’s words, to use “both traditional and non-traditional media to communicate and interact with a broad and diversified audience about issues directly relevant to their lives’.³⁴ The *EcoArtVan* achieves this goal by addressing ecological issues in an accessible manner. At the same time, through its mobility, it becomes a unique contribution to the artistic climate of Canada by creating new venues for experiencing art. In a conversation I had with Andrew Davies about the *EcoArtVan* he wrote,

³² Baxter, Iain. “Interview with Cara Said”. (April 3, 2011).

³³ Carruthers. “MAPPING THE TERRAIN.” 8.

³⁴ Burke, Rebecca. “Dark Forces at Mount Allison University” in *Public art in Canada: Critical Perspectives* ed. McLean, James S., Annie Gérin, 239-40. (University of Toronto Press, 2009). 239-40.

By entering into a non-art context the *EcoArtVan* has the unique opportunity to engaging the curiosity and imagination of the general public during their daily routine. For some people this surprise is their first introduction to contemporary art. This type of conceptual experience that can open a whole new way of looking at the world can be life changing for some individuals particularly if that individual has an aptitude for art.³⁵

Given the ability to drive to locations, the van was able to engage with a diversity of audiences from all different cultural and economic backgrounds. The van drove through the city of Toronto and the GTA. It visited schools (education), a major cultural institution (the AGO), public libraries (representing leisure, and public services) and City Hall (representing politics)—literally traversing a route connecting these various social sectors. The institutions involved—Model Schools for Inner Cities, The Ontario Ministry of Education, the AGO, No.9, TDSB, Trillium Foundation, Toronto Public Libraries—found relevance in each other through their shared interests in educational and Green initiatives. Jayne Pyper from the Toronto Public Libraries stated that from the perspective of libraries the project encompassed multifaceted benefits: “It supports cultural expression at the community level, enables our library branches to serve as venues for accessible cultural and arts events, and contributes to the green agenda by providing public education programming focused on environmental issues.”³⁶ Perceptions were also changed at the AGO. In an interview with Wendy Ng and Lorrie Ann Smith, they stated that, “We don’t do outreach as part of our platform for school visits, so for us it’s an interesting model to go out and provide that access, going out there breaks down several access barriers.”³⁷ The project also brought teachers and students back to the gallery in a number of ways. The first was for an environmentally oriented gallery tour, *Going Green Art and the Environment*. The students and teachers came to the AGO to go on this tour that explored environmental issues through artworks in the permanent collection. The tour developed the students’ skills in art appreciation and critical analysis. Relating directly to their curriculum, the tour created a place for the students at the AGO that was meaningful to their lives. Secondly, all of the artworks that were created by the students as well as *Green Sweeper Portraits* were exhibited at the AGO in Walker Court. In a night of celebration, the students and all of the participants involved in the project were invited back to the AGO for an opportunity to interact with BAXTER&, and to see their artworks hanging in the gallery (Figure 17). As the van drove through the city it opened up more

³⁵ Davies, Andrew. “Interview with Cara Said”. (March 22, 2011).

³⁶ Pyper, Jayne. “Correspondance with Andrew Davies,” Toronto Public Libraries. *No.9 Feedback File*, 4. (June 30, 2010).

³⁷ Ng, Wendy and Smith, Lorrie Ann. “Interview with Cara Said.” (March 18, 2011).

organic perceptions of collaboration, and established norms for experiencing art, learning about art and science, and addressing environmental issues.

No.9 is creating something completely new for Toronto by initiating temporary public artworks throughout the city. Through partnerships, they gain access to greater funding and varying sources of advertising and forums for raising awareness. These are the benefits of partnering with city representatives such as the TDSB, the AGO, and an established artist such as IAIN BAXTER&. These collaborations place the project in prominent public view. Through the *EcoArtVan*, Canadian public art was rendered more dynamic, visible and accessible by way of its mobility, and complex collaborations. This enabled contact with the public audience, thereby igniting interaction and communication. Andrew Davies has remarked,

There have been many successful educational outreach projects in the past. The new perspective that the *EcoArtVan* brings is in its hybrid educational experience of learning about a great contemporary artist while at the same time becoming aware of important environmental issues. In addition the *EcoArtVan* project brought a fresh perspective on how environmental organizations like the WWF can partner with Art organizations like No. 9 and the AGO to bring a great educational experience to thousands of inter-city school students.³⁸ □

Through accessible media, pedagogical techniques, mobility, a focus on environmental issues, and partnerships between institutions aiming to achieve common goals, the *EcoArtVan* was able to create a new dynamic within traditional daily routines of human interaction and communication. Influences, inspirations and mandates overlap with the *EcoArtVan* project through the careful use of 'cool' media, by operating in varying locations, and through interacting with diverse audiences, participants, and collaborators. All of these factors converged to create a work that has altered ingrained perceptions of daily activity, social systems, education and artistic practice. I have demonstrated that the *EcoArtVan* shifted perspectives in realms of art/education, art/science/environmental issues, and art/community/institutional ties.

Through its embrace of communicative action, its engagement with relevant issues and accessible media, the *EcoArtVan* assumed an educational persona. In turn, the various individuals involved in the project began to see how public art collaborations can enrich their own structures, enhance their mandates, and spark vital discussion about our environment.

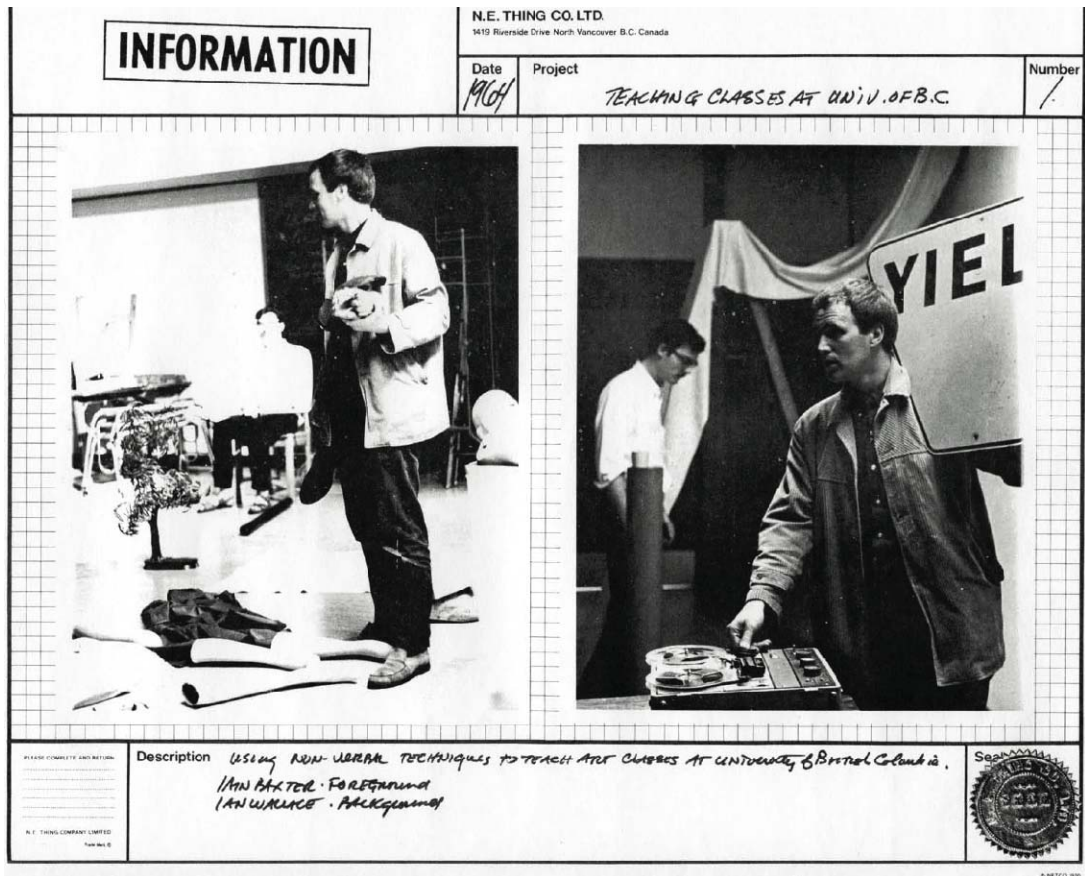
³⁸ Davies. *Interview*.

Figures



(Figure 1)

IAIN BAXTER& the *EcoArtVan* at City Hall, 2010
©No.9 Contemporary Art and the Environment



INFORMATION

N.E. THING CO. LTD.
1419 Riverside Drive North Vancouver B.C. Canada

Date
1964

Project
TEACHING CLASSES AT UNIV. OF B.C.

Number
/

PLEASE COMPLETE AND RETURN
N.E. THING COMPANY LIMITED
Form No. 2

Description *using NON-VERBAL TECHNIQUES TO TEACH ART CLASSES AT UNIVERSITY OF BRITISH COLUMBIA.
IAIN BAXTER - FOREGROUND
IAN WALLACE - BACKGROUND*



© NETCO 1970

(Figure 2)

IAIN BAXTER&
Teaching Classes at University of B.C., 1964
©NETCO 1970



(Figure 3)

IAIN BAXTER&
Liquid Detergent, Vancouver, British Columbia, 1965
30 1/4" x 40 1/4" □
Chromira print



(Figure 4)

IAIN BAXTER&
Still Life, 4 Blue Bottles, 1965
32" x 38" □
Vacuum formed plastic



(Figure 5)

IAIN BAXTER&
GREEN SWEEP; OVER & OUT; SKEWERED
Mixed Media
© No.9 Contemporary Art and the Environment



(Figure 6)

IAIN BAXTER&
Detail *ZERO EMISSIONS*, 2010
Mixed Media
© No.9 Contemporary Art and the Environment



(Figure 7)

IAIN BAXTER&
SHIPPED OUT, 2010
Mixed Media
© No.9 Contemporary Art and the Environment



(Figure 8)

IAIN BAXTER&
Detail *SHIPPED OUT*, 2010
Mixed Media
© No.9 Contemporary Art and the Environment



(Figure 9)

IAIN BAXTER&
Detail *ANIMAL PRESERVE*, 2010
Mixed Media
© No.9 Contemporary Art and the Environment



(Figure 10)

IAIN BAXTER&
Detail *Heads, you win, tails...*, 2010
Mixed Media
© No.9 Contemporary Art and the Environment



(Figure 11)

IAIN BAXTER&
EXTINCTION (front); *SKEWERED* (back); *ZERO EMISSIONS* (right), 2010
Mixed Media
© No.9 Contemporary Art and the Environment

Drawing and painting *HANDSCAPES* at various schools: Rose Ave., Ryerson, Kingsview Village and Sprucecourt.



(Figure 12)

Handscapes and endangered Animals, 2010
© No.9 Contemporary Art and the Environment



Reading about adopted at-risk species at Kingsview Village and visiting the IAIN BAXTER& ECOARTVAN at Ryerson.

(Figure 13)

WWF Animal Adoption Kits, 2010
© No.9 Contemporary Art and the Environment



(Figure 14)

Handscapes,
© No.9 Contemporary Art and the Environment

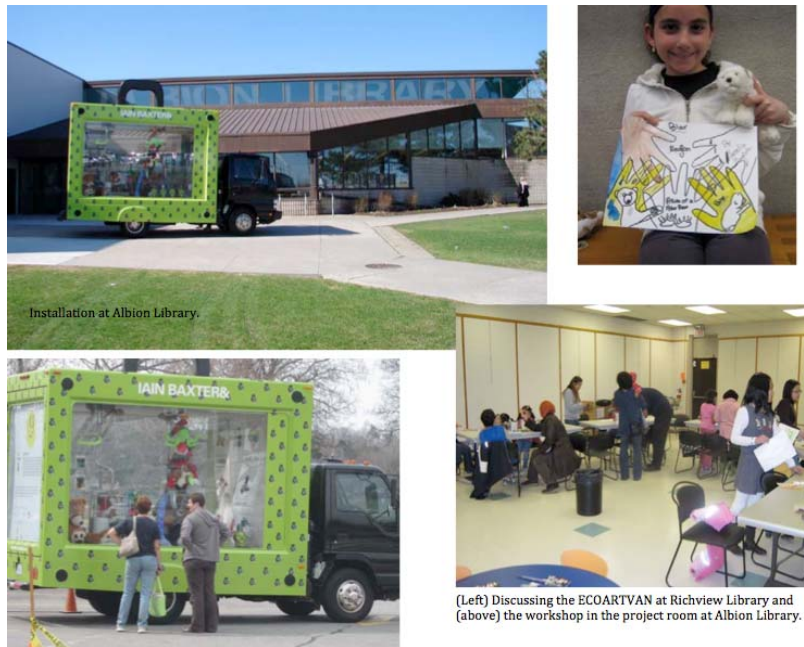
2010



Recess at George Webster with Pam Lobb, Volunteer Docent and the IAIN BAXTER& ECOARTVAN .

(Figure 15)

EcoArtVan at George Webster, 2010
© No.9 Contemporary Art and the Environment



(Figure 16)

EcoArtVan at Toronto public Libraries, 2010
© No.9 Contemporary Art and the Environment



(Figure 17)

Celebration Night: Iain Baxter & the *EcoArtVan*
Art Gallery of Ontario, June 9 2010
© No.9 Contemporary Art and the Environment

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