

Trash Becomes Treasure

Environmental Art Benefits the Belt Line

With all the attention surrounding “going green”, it is no surprise that sustainability has made its way into the fine arts. This fall, Georgia’s chapter of the *International Interior Design Association* (IIDA) will host its 6th Annual *Trash-to-Treasure* (T2T) event to benefit the *Atlanta Belt Line Project*. T2T showcases “environmental art” from local, regional and national artists, and is one of IIDA Georgia’s signature events throughout the year that help increase public awareness of the organization’s mission to promote the interior design profession while positively impacting communities throughout Georgia. While there is much excitement surrounding the event being held at Knoll’s Atlanta showroom on September 23, 2010, IIDA Georgia’s goal is to make this T2T undertaking the most successful since its inception in 2005.



PROMOTING SUSTAINABILITY

According to Tara Ackerman, this year’s IIDA Georgia chairperson for the event’s committee, T2T is a fundraiser that showcases art with an emphasis on themes of recyclability, renewability and environmental awareness. What better way is there to promote sustainability? This event asks artists to put their creativity to the test and create from what is considered other’s “trash”; the outcome is a bountiful on entries that become someone else’s “treasure”.



Generally, there is a call for T2T entries each year during the summer. Once all submissions have been received, a juried competition ensues where three of the submissions are selected for the following awards: *Trash Talk* (Most Expressive), *Piece of Trash* (Best use of recycled materials), and *Top Trash* (Best Overall). The three winning pieces are then sold during a live auction at the event, and all the other entries are sold via silent auction at the event. Prior to submitting their work, all artists understand that their submission to the competition is considered a donation towards IIDA Georgia’s goals.

RECEIVING REWARD

The major reward for artists is that their work is displayed for all to see garnering much appreciated local attention and press; it also gives them an opportunity to use their art as a form of social activism by raising awareness about environmentally conscious means of producing modern art. Past regional and national artists who have contributed their work have included: Deanna Sirlin, Talle Johnson, Tadashi Torii, Mark Karelson, Judson Vereen and Lily Smernou. In addition, the Greater Atlanta Interior Design and Architecture community has contributed their artistic talent to the competition/showcase as well. In its five year history, IIDA Georgia has raised nearly \$16,000 to contribute toward art projects that will raise the profile and contribute to the success of the Atlanta Belt Line.

PROVIDING BENEFIT

The Atlanta Belt Line Project is a massive urban design and redevelopment project with sustainability initiatives that outlines how Atlanta will grow for several decades. Comprehensive development plans for the project include: transit, trails, parks, economic development, affordable workforce housing, workforce development, environmental cleanup and reuse, public art, historic preservation, which the Atlanta Development Authority hopes will engage active community involvement. IIDA Georgia’s efforts through T2T are to directly contribute to the public art component of the BeltLine plans appropriately called *Art on the Beltline*.

MAKING IT POSSIBLE

IIDA Georgia is able to put on T2T through generous sponsorships from local, regional and national companies. This year’s T2T sponsors include: *CV Art Supplies*, *Knoll*, *Newell Recycling*, *PlasMet Recycling* and *OC Atlanta Magazine*, who are all Platinum level sponsors; there are also quite a few Bronze and Gold level sponsors. The event has entertainment, food, speakers offering information on the BeltLine, and (most importantly) incredible art by a variety of artists. Readers interested in learning more about the T2T and IIDA Georgia can visit the chapter’s website at www.iidageorgia.org. To visit or learn more about the Knoll Atlanta Showroom, please contact the showroom directly at (404) 522-1835. In addition, an overview of the Atlanta BeltLine project is available at www.beltline.org.

As the old adage says, “one man’s trash is another man’s treasure”; who could have ever imagined that this proverb would become a source of inspiration for modern art. IIDA Georgia has found a way to revolutionize the concept into a signature event that promotes community engagement in the Greater Atlanta Area while fostering environmental awareness through its *Trash-to-Treasure*.

RONNIE BELIZAIRE