

**Kate Pocrass' *Mundane Journeys*  
Karen Moss**

Working within the traditions of Joseph Beuys's idea of "social sculpture" and the Fluxus artists' attention to "insignificant" phenomena, San Francisco-based Kate Pocrass creates specific systems and structures for the public to experience art and everyday life within urban environments. Using telephones, her Web site, and word-of-mouth contact, Pocrass invites audiences to specific urban sites and vernacular experiences as she performs the hybridized role of artist/curator/designer/writer/ tour guide.

In 2002-3 Pocrass developed her *Portable Exhibition Venues* by embedding small-scale works by twelve artists in her hat, jacket, shoes, wallet, and Walkman, using her own body and clothing as the site for the "group show." Through a Web site, viewers could arrange an appointment to see the exhibition in a particular locale or simply meet Pocrass randomly on the street. According to the artist: "Each Venue circumvented the usual gallery process and created an alternative to traditional art spaces by making artwork available and accessible to a non-gallery audience. The Venues are about everyday attire, casual settings, mundane and unspectacular surroundings."<sup>1</sup>

In the ongoing *Mundane Journeys* project, started in 2001, Pocrass's goal is "to call attention to easily overlooked, everyday details"<sup>2</sup> in specific neighborhoods by identifying and mapping destinations and maps itineraries. Since 2001 Pocrass has updated her *Mundane Journeys* telephone hotline each week with directions to new destinations, inviting audiences to walk, bike, or take public transit to sites to discover and ponder surprising details that often go unnoticed in the bustle of everyday life. She also makes postings to her Web site, prints hand-drawn maps with short annotations, and conducts both bus and walking tours.

For the *2006 California Biennial* Pocrass created a series of *Mundane Journeys* specifically for Orange County. Unfamiliar with the territory, she conducted research by talking to people about underrecognized and unusual places in their neighborhoods, then visited these locations to choose specific destinations. In contrast to San Francisco's discrete, charming neighborhoods, easily navigated by foot or public transit, the county's immense suburban sprawl elicited clusters of itineraries. For the exhibition's opening weekend Pocrass led bus tours of the *Orange County Journeys*. She also made printed maps and recordings on a telephone hotline at both museum sites to allow visitors to self-tour to specific destinations. In a region where cars and malls dominate the landscape, these destinations invite the public to pause and meditate upon myriad unnoticed details that reflect the diversity of this immense county.

Pocrass's project recalls Guy Debord's Situationist idea of the *dérive* (literally, "drifting," a flow of acts and encounters as opposed to a more directed journey or stroll) or tours by contemporary artists such as Andrea Fraser and Christine Hill. Rather than critiquing or attempting to retool elements of the hypercapitalistic urban spectacle, *Mundane Journeys* aim to promote social engagement by inviting

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<sup>1</sup> Kate Pocrass, *Mundane Journeys* website, *Portable Exhibition Venues* project, <http://www.silentgallery.com/pocrass/pev/about.html>

<sup>2</sup> Kate Pocrass, *Mundane Journeys* motto from printed map, 2005.

individuals to interact with other people, places, and things, revealing relational aesthetics.<sup>3</sup> With an amazing eye for detail, Pocrass is a Zen-like flâneuse who encourages her constantly changing public to revel in the pure pleasure of experiencing art and life.

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<sup>3</sup>A term originally coined in 1990 by Nicolas Bourriaud and published in his Relations Aesthetics, Dijon: les presses du reel, 1998.