



Los Angeles Contemporary Exhibitions
PRESS RELEASE
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KARAOKE ICE

a delicious pop culture mash-up

by Nancy Nowacek, Katie Salen and Marina Zurkow

presented throughout Los Angeles

31 Aug – 3 Sept and 6 – 9 Sept 2007

Karaoke, It's not just for Squirrels



(8 August 2007) Kicking off Labor Day weekend through 9 September, LACE is proud to present **KARAOKE ICE**, a mobile public art project that contributes to the unique expressions of LA's local street cultures. *Karaoke Ice* turns three familiar expressions of "network culture"-- ice cream trucks, datasets, and karaoke bars -- into a vibrant participatory art experience. **Lucci**, an ice cream truck-turned-mobile-karaoke-stage, with her sidekick **Remedios, the Squirrel Cub**, is deployed to unite people in a collective quest to perform and document community character. The artists **Nancy Nowacek, Katie Salen** and **Marina Zurkow**, believe this is a marriage of necessity; the ice cream truck needs a better soundtrack and karaoke singers need an audience.

Familiar songs morphed into ice cream truck melodies, produced and arranged by local composer **Lem Jay Ignacio**, will act as a beacon for local residents to engage in this collective community performance. Customized with colorful graphics and a disco ball, the rear of the truck becomes a stage that allows participants to perform for a local audience, using a customized karaoke engine to select, sing and record a song. Free frozen ice pops distributed by *Remedios, the Squirrel Cub* entice prospective performers to record their tracks. The *Karaoke Ice* website, **www.karaokeice.com**, features a practice area for aspiring performers.

KARAOKE ICE TOUR

Breaking out from its Hollywood headquarters, LACE designed the *Karaoke Ice* tour to visit an array of distinct neighborhoods across Los Angeles. *Lucci* and *Remedios* will make daytime and evening appearances at a variety of public spaces that encourage social gathering. Tour details will be posted by **6 August** on LACE's website, **www.welcometolace.org**. To view a short documentary on the debut of the project at the Zero One Festival in San Jose, CA, go to **www.o-matic.com/isea/documentation/**.

Karaoke Ice Community Partners include a range of organizations, events and sites that play an active role in cultural and economic community development in their neighborhoods, such as the *African Marketplace and Cultural Faire (Baldwin Hills)*, *Belmont Village Assisted Living of Hollywood Hills (Hollywood)*, *Firecracker at Grand Star Restaurant (Chinatown)*, *Hollywood Carwash (Hollywood)*, *Hollywood Farmer's Market (Hollywood)*, *Hope and Peace Pocket Park (Macarthur)*, *Japanese American National Museum (Little Tokyo)*, *KAOS Network (Leimert Park)*, *Macarthur Park (Macarthur)*, *Machine Project (Echo Park)*, *Plaza De La Raza (East LA)*, *Plummer Park (West Hollywood)*, *Santa Monica Museum of Art (Santa Monica)*, *Swap Meet at Betalevel (Chinatown)*, *Telic Art Exchange (Chinatown)*, and *Watts Towers Arts Center (Watts)* (list in formation).

This project relied on the indispensable collaboration and support of Gordon Knox and the Sally and Don Lucas Artist Programs, Montalvo Arts Center, Joel Slayton and students from the CADRE Laboratory for New Media/San Jose State University: John Bruneau, Thomas Asmuth, Kristin O'Friel, Corrie Tse, Michael Weisert, Sarah Lowe, Owen Premore, Bruce Gardner and Ben Ward.

Karaoke Ice is made possible with generous support from Alamance Foods, Blik Surface Graphics, Chapman & Associates Charitable Foundation, the City of West Hollywood, ColorKinetics, Cool Neon, Marcus Doshi Lighting Design, Eovia, Extra Space Storage, Bob Grimm, Hanger 18 Studios, The James Irvine Foundation, Ministry of Transport, Montalvo Arts Center, National Endowment for the Arts, New York University, Sally and Don Lucas Artist Programs, D. Sardy and Symbol Technologies.



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ABOUT THE ARTISTS

Nancy Nowacek is a graphic and sound designer interested in narrative, identity and social interaction. She has worked on interactive community-based narrative installations for the Smithsonian Folklife Festival and UNICEF, as well as producing polite mischief and social discourse through *The Starlings*, a collaboration with Marina Zurkow. Most recently, she was the art director at *Metropolis* magazine, where she illustrated, photographed and occasionally wrote, in addition to designing the magazine. With the belief that design is inherently a multi-modal activity, she has previously worked on and for a diverse body of studios and disciplines, including Bruce Mau design, RGA Interactive, Gap Inc., MTV and the International Coalition of Site Museums of Conscience. In addition to *Metropolis*, Nowacek has written about design for journals, most recently about typography and character for *Visual Communication's* special issue, "The New Typography" and for several of Steven Heller's books. Her work has been featured in the Cooper-Hewitt Design Triennial, as an ADC 'Young Gun', and most recently, in Teal Triggs' newest book, *Experimental Typography*.

Katie Salen is the Executive Director of the Gamelab Institute of Play, as well as an Associate Professor in the Design and Technology department at Parsons the New School for Design. She is co-author of two books: *Rules of Play: Game Design Fundamentals* and the *Game Design Reader*, as well as the forthcoming volume *The Ecology of Games*, for which she served as editor. Katie worked as an animator on Richard Linklater's critically acclaimed animated feature, *Waking Life* and recently co-developed *Karaoke Ice*, an ice-cream truck turned mobile karaoke unit deployed to collect and curate idiosyncratic performances of tinkle-pop songs. She designs big games, slow games, and game-like experiences for audiences of all types and is currently working on a multiplayer online game to teach kids game design through Gamelab. Katie spends much of her time gaming on trains and planes in lieu of single serving meals.

Marina Zurkow works with character and narrative in animated cartoons, interactive installations and print and pop objects. Zurkow's recent projects include *The Space Invaders*, a site-specific single channel video for WNET/PBS in New York, and the seven channel animated installation, *Nicking the Never*, which premiered at FACT in the U.K. in 2005. She created the award-winning episodic cartoon *Braingirl*; the reactive character installation *Pussy Weevil, or How I Learned to Love the War*; and *PDPal*, a public art project for screen, web and mobile devices (with architect Scott Paterson and technologist Julian Bleecker). Zurkow's icons and characters have been incorporated into films, hotel design, lightboxes and clothing. Upcoming projects include *Funnelhead: Adventures in Psychotropia*, which will be realized as a graphic novel and as an animated, sculptural installation. Zurkow's work has been screened and exhibited internationally, including Sundance, the Rotterdam Film Festival, Ars Electronica, Creative Time, The Walker Art Center and Eyebeam Atelier. She has been a NYFA Fellow, a Rockefeller New Media Fellow, and received numerous grants, including Creative Capital, the Jerome Foundation and New York State Council on the Arts. She teaches at NYU's Interactive Technology Program.

ABOUT LACE

LACE (Los Angeles Contemporary Exhibitions) is a nonprofit contemporary art center located in the heart of Hollywood. Internationally recognized as a pioneer among art institutions, LACE curates and produces art and events that inspire the public imagination and engage with timely issues that shape local and global life. www.welcometolace.org.

Additional support for LACE and its programs comes from the City of Los Angeles Department of Cultural Affairs, The Coffee Bean & Tea Leaf, The Getty Foundation, Izze Beverage Company, Jockey Hollow Foundation, Los Angeles County Arts Commission, Morris Family Foundation, Stone Brewing Co. and the members of LACE.

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