

## **The Santa Fe New Mexican – Friday, 5-30-08**

### **Artist transforms Toys and Trash**

By Anne Constable  
*The New Mexican*

An art exhibition with as much appeal for the general public as the art intelligentsia? That's the aim of Lucky Number Seven, SITE Santa Fe's family-friendly Seventh International Biennial, which opens next month, at various venues around town.

Prior to the opening, Hiroshi Fuji, one of the participating artists, will be setting up a kaekko, or bazaar, where children will be able to exchange their outgrown or unwanted toys with each other, creating a new market and new values for the previously worthless items. The kaekko, first initiated in Japan, is Fuji's answer to over-consumption and waste and is a hallmark of his artistic practice.

After the kaekko, he'll work with other artists to turn the left over toys into fanciful bird sculptures. These art-making sessions are called kaeru, a Japanese word meaning "to transform or change."

Some of the new pieces will be on display at the Museum of International Folk Art during the biennial.

And for Santa Fe Opera, Fuji, who lives and works in Fukuoka, Japan, will collaborate with local artists and teams of volunteers to fashion thousands of recycled water bottles into sculptures that will be installed on the lamp posts of the company's parking lot.

The biennial, curated by Lance M. Fung, features 25 artists from 18 institutions and 16 countries. It runs from June 22 to Oct. 26.

"My goal at SITE Santa Fe was to make a biennial that would touch and inspire the mainstream public as much as the art world," Fung explained in his catalog essay.

He invited the artists to develop SITE-specific work inspired by various locations. Many of the artists, like Fuji, chose spaces beyond the walls of SITE Santa Fe.

The National Dance Institute-New Mexico is providing both the space for the toy exchange, which is for children ages 5-13, said artistic director Tim Santos. They will bring in toys they have outgrown and register them with "bankers," older students from the NDI programs. The "bankers" will separate the toys and assign each a point value. Children get points just for showing up. They will also earn points for a dance activity and a treasure hunt where they can win prizes as well. At the end of the event they will use the points to buy a "new" toy.

While "it's always great to recycle and save our earth," Santos said, the kaekko, is a "great opportunity to expand our horizons" beyond the song and dance that NDI teaches.

The event is from 5:30 to 7:30 p.m. Tuesday at NDI, 1140 Alto St. Fuji will also lead the kaeru from 3 p.m. to 5 p.m. on June 6 and 7 at Fine Arts for Children & Teens (FACT), 1516 Pacheco St.

There is still time to register. Call Stephanie Behning at 992-2787.

SITE Santa Fe is serving as a collection point for gathering the materials needed for Fuji's art. Clear plastic water bottles (rinsed and capped if possible) as well as clean packaging from snacks and sweets are wanted along with outgrown or broken toys. Donations are accepted from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. Mondays through Saturdays at SITE Santa Fe, 1606 Paseo de Peralta. Call Katy Hill at 989-1199 for more information.

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