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VALLETTA INTERNATIONAL VISUAL ARTS FESTIVAL (VIVA)

April 15-May 30, 2017 – Valletta, Malta

ART IN ODD PLACES (AiOP) 2017 SENSE

October 12 - October 15, 2017

Hudson River to Avenue C on 14th Street - New York City

58th MIDWESTERN INVITATIONAL

June 18 – September 3, 2017

The Rourke Art Gallery + Museum, Moorhead, MN

ART FOR ALEPPO

Opens April 22, 2017 Closing date: TBA

Catalyst Gallery Beacon, NY

VIVA VALLETTA - MNI WICONI = WATER IS LIFE

Billy's *Honor the Hidden and Collected Waters* will be featured in the Valletta International Visual Arts Festival (VIVA) on the island nation of Malta. From the Mississippi or "Father of Waters" to "Mother Ganges" (Ganga Mata), the importance of water to life itself is international and universal, but when a tap is simply twisted it's easy to take it for granted. Such is the case on Malta as fresh water resources dwindle and by EU standards are in an extreme situation. The award-winning artist Billy X. Curmano and the award-winning hydrologist Marco Cremona bring a sacred awareness and water cleansing ritual together with practical applications for protecting, preserving and re-using water in "live art" - on and offsite – installations.

Billy X. Curmano is known for extreme projects in the environment like a desert fast, arctic journey and 3,809.96 km (2,367.4 mile) Mississippi River Swim as performance and environmental statement. Each morning before the Swim got underway, he performed a ritual that with variations became his Cleansing Ceremony. It has even been performed after a Pipe Ceremony and with the approval of elders from the Leech Lake Band of Ojibwe in Northern Minnesota. He carries the spirit of the Great River in a vial of water collected from its source on the first day of his swim for an intentional pilgrimage to the hidden and collected waters of Malta. Marco Cremona will help guide Billy's journey to these important resources. He has earned a reputation with innovative techniques to conserve and re-use water and re-direct stormwater to mitigate flood problems. The two "Ambassadors for Clean Water" will establish an eXperimental Art Research Terminal (XART) at the festival with documentation of the performative process and innovative technologies along with water samples, videos, charts, maps and other important information. Billy X. will add some river tales and water adventures before he joins the Mississippi and Malta Waters in a sacred ritual and ocean harp serenade. The remnant Waters are destined to remain in Valletta as post performance

sculptural evidence.

ART IN ODD PLACES

Billy's Cleansing Ceremony re-appears as his Key Note Address for the Art in Odd Places (AIOP) festival in New York City. As the Futurists, Dadaists and Conceptualists responded to the absurdity of their times with farces and unusual acts, Billy brings an Exploratory Expeditionary Art Adventure Team (EEAAT) to search for the hidden and collected waters of Manhattan... and a possible passage connecting the Hudson and East Rivers. It celebrates the extra special absurdity of our own time.

You can hang with the Key Note Speaker in NYC as an EEAAT volunteer and eat pretty darn well as well. Billy says, "Meet me on 14th Street" with the historic Chelsea, Gramercy, Union & Stuyvesant Squares, the Meatpacking & Flat Iron Districts to the North and Alphabet City, the East, West and Greenwich Villages to the South with a stop on and under the Highline for good measure." Bring a life jacket. www.artinoddplaces.org



"Portrait of the Artist with Packaged Head" © 1977 Billy Curmano

WATER WARS MNI WICONI = WATER IS LIFE

You may think Water Wars are hyperbole, but the first shots have already been fired. After Capitalism turned common land to commodity and private property, everything was up for grabs... even the sea and finally the skies. In Cochabamba, Bolivia corporate giant Bechtel moved in to oversee and modernize the water works for the “common good”, but predictably water prices rose and it became the common bad. People began collecting rainwater, which hurt the company’s bottom line.

Corporate political malfeasance addressed their profit problem with a new tax on rain - rubber stamped by the government. The citizens of Cochabamba resisted and the resultant water war left 6 dead and 175 injured on the people’s side. In the end, the Bolivian fight won back their water rights and the “gangsters of capitalism”¹ went off to hide.

Oil and water don’t mix. You can live without one, but not the other. One day the world will be sorry we kind of traded oil and coal for water. Or let’s at least say, greed and short term profit at the top encouraged reckless decisions like fracking, pipelines, tar sands, mountain top removal, coal ash disposal and the never ending search for more energy.

In the USA as *Fandango* goes to press, the Water Protectors of the Standing Rock Sioux {www.standingrock.org} have been struggling to stop the Dakota Access Pipeline (DAPL) from going under their water source. Time has shown pipelines eventually leak. Pipeline resistance has spread widely. The re-authorized Keystone XL pipeline will require eminent domain to take over private land in Nebraska, but eminent domain was established to take land for government and public-purpose projects not private gain. State laws have paused it. As the world transitions from fossil fuels, they become economically less and less competitive with alternative energy, obsolete and like rotary dial phones and steam engines irrelevant and unnecessary.

The current political climate in the USA threatens the environmental progress made with the Clean Air and Water Acts. Fortunately, the earth has some good lawyers working and sending messages through current and future litigation strategies to at least slow the dismantling of the environment.

A few feisty billionaire executives and politicians don’t believe human activity is a major contributing factor in the changing climate, but 97% of climate scientists worldwide are certain of it. That leaves only 3% in doubt. If you needed an operation would you look for a doctor with a 3% success rate?

The USA, along with most of the world, signed and ratified The Paris Agreement to help mitigate the impacts of climate change and reach a “global peaking of greenhouse gas emissions as soon as possible”. It was agreed to and signed by 194 nations and ratified by 132 as of February 2017. The age of fossil fuels is coming to a close and this worldwide agreement is one of the incentives to an age of clean power. When solar power leaks, it is just a sunny day.

Signing the Paris Agreement obliges nations to refrain from acts that would defeat its object and purpose. Ratification signifies the country’s intent to be legally bound to the terms of the treaty at the international level. It includes a 4-year long process to break from the agreement. No one can just wave a magic wand to get out. Here’s where the lawyers come back in or as Warren Zevon might say, “Send lawyers, guns and money the shit has hit the fan”.

¹ From *War is A Racket*, 1935, Major General Smedley Butler, USMC - at the time of his death he was the most decorated Marine in US History.

RIVERS GAIN PERSONHOOD

Whanganui iwi, a Maori tribe, on New Zealand’s North Island has been fighting for the recognition of their river, Te Awa Tupua, as an ancestor for 140 years. Now, it’s become the world’s first river granted the same legal rights as a human being and it brings the longest running litigation in the nation’s history to a good end. The river’s new status means harming or abusing it is the same as harming the tribe. A guardian from the crown and from the tribe will be appointed to act on behalf of the river. The impact may just reverberate around the world. In India, a northern court cited the New Zealand precedent as an example and accorded the status of living human entities to two sacred rivers, the Ganges and its main tributary the Yamuna. A court in the Himalayan town of Nainital appointed three officials to act as legal custodians responsible for preserving and protecting the rivers. -From *The Guardian*, March 16 & 21, 2017

The practical applications are still unclear, but it’s more logical than granting personhood to corporations. Billy is researching the possible precedent for American Rivers. He has long regarded the Mississippi with this tenderness, “Like a lover, the river embraces me and I serve as an Ambassador for Clean Water.” From his *Selections from Objects* Exhibition Catalog, The Contemporary Arts Center, New Orleans, 1997

ON MALTA: AN EXPERIMENT IN AWARENESS

In the abundance of water... an islander still thirsts. The Island nation of Malta is surrounded by water, but by European Union standards its freshwater resources are threatened and in an extreme situation. It has the highest population density in the EU and adds over a million water hungry tourists annually. The current water usage has been deemed unsustainable. If initiating good practices can correct the water sustainability challenges on Malta, it could become a model for water management elsewhere.

A sustainable future will come from a balance between new technology and the wisdom of past best practices. One hydrologist on Malta has been experimenting and winning international awards with both old and new ideas realized in his projects. Billy and Marco Cremona plan to meet and share their interest in water as a source of life. Marco will be his guide to the future of water on Malta and beyond.

There are no lakes or rivers on Malta. The Maltese have relied on the rains and aquifers that have been threatened by drought, illegal extraction, seawater infiltration and pollution. In more recent history, fossil fuel powered desalination plants have come online to quench their thirst.

A severe drought in the 70’s and early 80’s caused rationing of drinking water. Supplies were sometimes limited to only 2 or 3 glasses totaling 1419.53 ml of water a day. In came desalination, but – of course – “when you get what you want, don’t you want more”. Water usage went up. Desalination is energy hungry and fossil fuel driven on Malta. It contributes to climate change, which adds to the problems. It takes 7% of all the electricity consumed in the nation and is 4 to 8 times more expensive than groundwater.

The Maltese ancestors had an abundance of common sense. Evidence of human excavation some 5,000 years ago to create possibly the world’s first rainwater cisterns on Malta demonstrates the wisdom of the past. In fact, cisterns have been a building requirement since the Knights of St. John (Circa 1500’s).

As is often the case, when times were good the population sort of forgot about cisterns and those building requirements are rarely enforced. Most of the population is less than aware about the serious water problems. Putting regulations on water usage is a politically hot issue and the government doesn't want its hands burned, but the challenges could be solved through good governance, innovation, regulation and cooperation. Marco practices what he preaches. Using a combination of rainwater harvesting, low-cost graywater recycling and water conservation he's made his house in Mosta completely self-sufficient in water use. (It won the France 5 Report Terre Award 2009 as the best environmental project in the EU); His 2008 Hoter process treats wastewater into 2nd class and potable water thereby saving 85% of the water consumed by a hotel. (It was selected as a finalist in the CNBC/Allianz Good Entrepreneur Competition for the Best Green Business Idea in Europe). Agricultural practices with nitrates (a known carcinogen) have made treated wastewater actually safer to drink than spring water. In 2006, he developed what is probably the world's first urban-storm-water-to-potable water treatment plants. A more recent project includes intentionally drilling boreholes – not to draw water from the aquifer – but to make rainwater more easily find its way to enhance groundwater reserves while at the same time reducing flooding. (It won the Malta Innovation Award and was short-listed for others.) His work provides solutions that prove water management on Malta can be sustainable but he also does it “to embarrass the government into action.” Billy and Marco are both passionate about water. They hope to make others more aware. www.viva.org

Lakota	Mni Wiconi
Maltese	Ilma huwa Ħajja
Afrikanns	Water is lewe
Albanian	Uji është jetë
Amharic	የውሃ ሕይወት ነው
Azerbaijani	Su Həyatdır
Basque	Ura Life da
Belarusian	Вада гэта жыццё
Bengali	জল জীবন;

To be continued...

AGING IN ART... or some Artists do make it to Elderly

The Fandango has been in continuous publication since 1983. It is just one example of documentation as art for Billy. While he sometimes finds it troublesome and would prefer doing to documenting, he's kept daily journals on major projects. His attention to these matters helped make the publication of *Futurism's Bastard Son* by Mark Pezinger Verlag in Vienna a part of his legacy.

But how many artists never take the time to leave documentation - a catalog or record of their life's work? How much work finds its way to the dumpster simply for lack of storage. Billy saved a bundle of his own mother's art from the incinerator as an unnamed relative was about to cast it off – the unnamed thought everyone in the family already had some of Marion's work – so lets toss it.

At the very least, an artist should make some sort of list for the disposition of their work. Maybe just to family and friends - be realistic, space is a commodity and collections have to be cared for, so museums may have no interest. In any event, there is a web site to help artists plan their wills and estates:

www.ElderArtistsLegalResource.org

It's good to know, some people realize artists of all stripes create the culture and as such should be valued even as they often live at or below poverty level. Since 2000, The Research Center for Arts & Culture has involved itself with the legacy of older artists. Art Cart is one of the more intriguing projects that couples graduate students in the arts, health and aging with older professional visual artists to document their work and save our national legacy. It's intergenerational and interdisciplinary with young and old alike benefiting from the exchange. There have been other types of legacy projects with performing artists, dancers and jazz musicians.

Billy's fascination with death led to his 1983 3-day live burial *Performance for the Dead*. Besides the trappings of an international postal art exhibition, an Italian Wake and Jazz Funeral, he toyed with wills. A standout clause had dealers triple the price of his work while he was interred and promptly devalue it upon exhumation. His early cartoon for the *Art Workers News* included the line: “An artist in the morgue is worth two in the studio”.

ARTISTS RESERVED RIGHTS AGAIN

Billy attended the College Art Association annual conference and was surprised to find a session highlighting the work of Seth Sieglau. Seth and Robert Projansky drafted the *Artists Reserved Rights Transfer & Sales Agreement* that Billy was in part responsible for re-printing, distributing and actually using with his own work. When the session turned to discussion, he was able to comment about tying up the closing of the College of St. Teresa properties. The contract had a stipulation for the disposition of his *Impervious Flag* sculpture the college had purchased years earlier. Panelists were delighted to learn the contract had been so successful. There has been little documentation of its use and outcomes (See Vol. 39).

News Release: APT ACTION at 21ST.PROJECTS NYC

“(reservations for 9 people maximum plus their other halves)

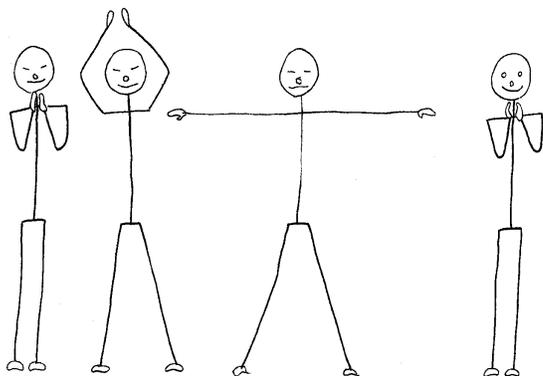
Apt Action

Nicolás Dumit Estévez Raful in Complicity with Billy X. Curmano

On Valentine's Day, Nicolás and Billy invite lesbian, gay, bi, trans, intersexual, pansexual, queer, polysexual, ecosexual, questioning, asexual, hetero... individuals to join for a session of exercises followed by a slice of cake and a glass of red wine. Come alone or with a partner!” – (News Release, Feb. 2017)

Billy's friend, Nicolás Dumit Estévez Raful, “treads an elusive path that manifests itself performatively or through experiences where the quotidian and art overlap”. He invited Billy to collaborate on a work for CPI eliminating the object and performer. Billy cast the I-Ching 9 times over 9 days to guide his instructions for 9 movements for 9 yet unknown participants. The audience/guest/performers arrived meditated and laughingly followed the simple exercises.

Critical Practices Inc. is a response to the complex and changing conditions that affects the emergence of new practices and ideas within the field of cultural production. By means of artists projects (21ST.PROJECTS) and roundtable discussions (LaTableRonde), Critical Practices seeks to provide platforms for the exchange of the diverse points of view necessary for the evaluation of those current critical, theoretical, and practical objectives that impact cultural production. – From CPI mission statement www.criticalpractices.org



*BREASTSTROKE

OR

STROKE BREAST



*ARMS: OUTSWEEP, INSWEEP, RECOVERY

*LEGS: FROG KICK

ART FOR ALEPPO

In the tradition of postal art, Billy donated a work to the *Art for Aleppo* exhibition at the Catalyst Gallery in the Art City of Beacon, NY. The works will be archived in a book published on demand and available from Blurb.com. The pieces will be sold and all proceeds from the project will go to *Save the Children Syria*. The show opens with a reception at the gallery April 22nd the closing is still to be announced. www.artforaleppo.org

DIRECT ACTION

You can take direct action against the assault on the environment and people by moving money and investments from big banks and corporate bandits to local banks and green financial services. Divesting sends a message and hits the bad actors where it hurts. Over 58,000 individuals, 696 institutions and the country of Ireland have divested \$5.44 trillion from fossil fuels since mid-February. Tips: www.BreakUpWithYourMegaBank.org <https://divestmentguide.org> www.Greenamerica.org/fossilfree

REMEMBER, you can pick up Billy's Book *Futurism's Bastard Son* and lots of other great stuff from the store: www.billyx.net

Bosnian	Voda je život
Bulgarian	Водата е живот
Catalan	L'aigua és vida
Cebuano	Tubig mao ang Kinabuhì
Chichewa	Water ndi Moyo
Chinese	水是生命
Corsican	L'acqua è vita
Croatian	Voda je život

To be continued...

Your INVITATION To FUN & ADVENTURE

The Billy X. Curmano Fan Club

If you enjoy contemporary artist Billy X. Curmano, here's a great way to stay abreast of his projects. Join the discriminating crowd and become a member of Billy's own Fan Club. Send the form, all correspondence and annual membership dues to:

ART WORKS USA 27979 COUNTY ROAD 17
WINONA, MN 55987 RING: 507.452.1598
billyx.net@gmail.com

Momma Curman, President Ex Officio Perpetuitas
 Kimberly Haedtke, Vice President Emeritus
MEMBERSHIP TYPES

\$2 **CHEAPO**: Wallet size membership card - some mailings.
 \$15 **IRREGULAR**: As above, plus well wishes from all of us.
 \$25 **REGULAR**: As above, plus a handsome wall certificate.
 \$50 **DELUXE**: As above, plus Great Moments In Performance Art Non-adhesive stamp series. All appropriate club mailings.
 \$250 **DELUXE PLUS**: As above, plus original print.
 \$750 **SUPER DELUXE**: As above, plus gift certificate and weekend vacation at Scenic Art Works USA (travel from Winona, MN included).
 \$1500 **SAINT**: As above, plus vacation extended 1 week.
 \$5000 **BUDDY**: As above, plus 1 of Billy's special pizzas and Billy will pal around with you for 1 week.

Institutional rate: Add 20% surcharge for 2 newsletters. 1 to circulate - 1 to archive. **Family rate**: Add 10% and the whole family gets membership cards. Make checks payable **Art Works USA**. Allow 4-6 weeks for delivery. Premium substitutions may be made at our whim.

MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION

Okay Kimberly! I just can't wait; here are my 2016 annual dues. I want to join Billy X. Curmano's Fan Club.

Name _____

Address _____

City _____

State _____ Zip _____

Phone _____

Signature _____

Membership Type _____ \$ _____ date _____

Add an E-mail and we might send up-dates and so on.