

frosch&portmann

The Wooden Carrot

Bruce Conkle

frosch&portmann is pleased to present *The Wooden Carrot*, Bruce Conkle's first solo exhibition with the gallery. The artist lives and works in Portland, Oregon.

A snowman kept alive inside a freezer; their natural habitat shrinking, snowpeople may now live inside freezers in order to survive, and we can keep them on life support as a signifier of man's 'triumph over nature.'

In his *Captive Snowman* series (ongoing since 2002), Conkle sculpts with real snow in large freezers and thus creates a substitute environment for a natural material. In this instillation, the artist continues to explore his theme of man's place in nature and gives an ironic commentary of environmental and political issues. The work combines art with humor to address serious issues. The freezer acts as artificial life support for something that occurs in the outdoors, but when the world heats up a few degrees can no longer survive out there. Taken inside an artificial environment as to save it or perhaps capture it to make a trophy case, the snowman can exist forever as long as the freezer is plugged in. We saved the last snowman from melting and now it is domesticated like an animal in a zoo waiting for extinction.

Bruce Conkle declares an affinity for mysterious natural phenomenon such as snow, crystals, volcanos, rainbows, fire, tree burls, and meteorites. He examines contemporary attitudes toward the environment, including deforestation, climate change, and extinction. Conkle's work often deals with man's place within nature, and frequently examines what he calls the "misfit quotient" at the crossroads.

Bruce Conkle received his B.A. from the University of Oregon at Eugene and his M.F.A. from Rutgers University, New Brunswick, NJ.

His work has shown around the world, including Reykjavik, Ulaanbaatar, Rio De Janeiro, New York, Chicago, Boston, Philadelphia, Miami, Seattle, and Portland. Recent projects include public art commissions for the Oregon Department of Transportation, TriMet/ MAX Light Rail, and Portland State University's Smith Memorial Student Union Public Art + Residency. In 2011 Bruce received a Hallie Ford Fellowship and in 2010 and an Oregon Arts Commission Artist Fellowship. His 2012 show *Tree Clouds* was awarded a project grant from the Regional Arts and Culture Council.