

# Invasion of Cabinetlandia

## Projecting ARTLIES into the Void

In the spring of 2003, *Cabinet* magazine announced the acquisition of a small plot of land in Luna County, New Mexico. Dubbing the scruffy turf "Cabinetlandia," this gesture was a inspired conceptual play with farcical utopian ambitions, linking a barren plot of desert with another purchase—2000 acres on the planet Mars—and with Gordon Matta-Clark's *Reality Properties: Fake Estates* (1973).<sup>1</sup> The following year, San Francisco-based artist Matthew Passmore erected a structure on Cabinetlandia—a permanent archive for the magazine, designed to withstand the brutal extremities of the area, but in 2005, disaster struck. After days of torrential downpour, Cabinetlandia and the archive lay in ruin.<sup>2</sup>

As with any national disaster, where some see tragedy others see opportunity. The time was ripe; I knew we must invade while the nation was on its knees... The next and obvious step was to assemble an army—foot soldiers to carry out the invasion. Enter the Land Arts of the American Southwest, a joint program of the University of New Mexico and the University of Texas at Austin. Each year, under the direction of instructors from both institutions, undergraduate students make a westbound pilgrimage, stopping at interminable sites, (like Smithson's *Spiral Jetty*) and creating their own ethereal earthworks along the way. I decided to contact Chris Taylor, the instructor in charge of the Texas component of the Land Arts program, and gauge his interest in collaborating—in invading Cabinetlandia in order to construct an ARTLIES archive atop its remains. Not only was Taylor game, he decided to make the project part of the following semester's curriculum.

What ultimately befell Taylor's army—ironically—were the same natural forces that devastated Cabinetlandia. Unable to complete their mission, the Land Arts students did what any well-trained army would do: they improvised. In this instance, failure could not have been more fortunate or poetic, conceptually speaking, confirming that although physical boundaries or logistical barriers may prevent movement and faculty, no one has power over the wind—or the ideas that ride on its invisible tide.

—Anjali Gupta

1 <http://cabinetmagazine.org/issues/10/NMclaimIntro.php>.

2 <http://cabinetmagazine.org/issues/20/nmupdate.php>.

*Without the collusion of many individuals, this collaboration would never have come to pass, but ARTLIES wishes to specifically thank Chris Taylor, Jimmy Luu, Cynthia Toles, Sina Najifi and Cabinet magazine for their effort and support.*

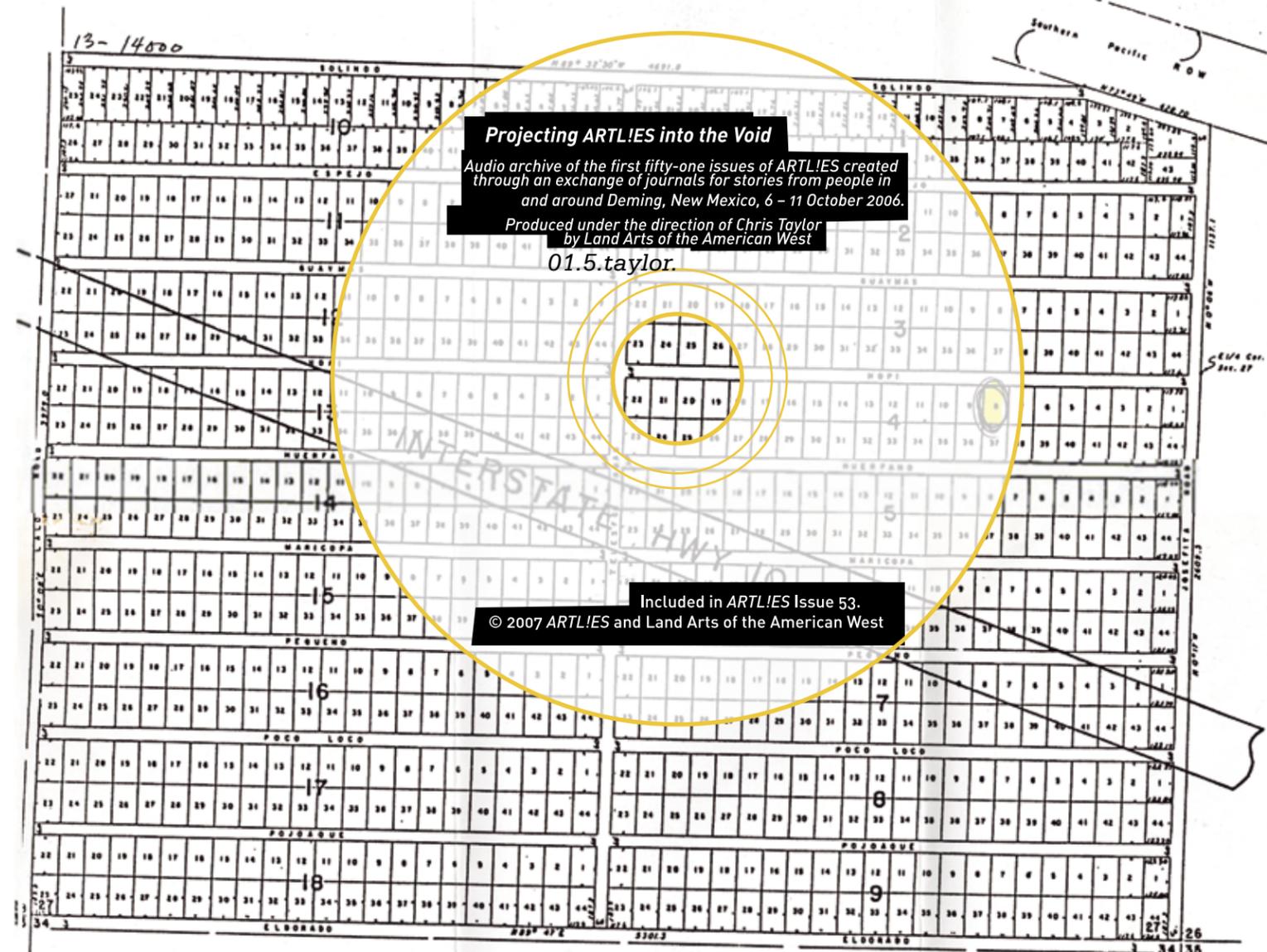
*The audio component of Projecting ARTLIES into the Void can be accessed online at [www.artlies.org](http://www.artlies.org).*

ED  
OFFICE  
1952  
IRIBAN  
C.H. COLE  
PL 8 13 60

UNIT No. 35  
DEMING RANCHETTES  
S1/2, S1/2 N1/2 SECTION 27, T23S, R7W, NMPM.  
LUNA COUNTY, NEW MEXICO

APRIL 1962

C.H. COLE  
PL 8 13 60



DEDICATION  
The foregoing subdivisions of that certain tract of land, herein above, being the S1/2, S1/2, Section 27, T23S, R7W, N.M.P.M., Luna County, New Mexico, and more particularly described as follows: Beginning at the Southeast Corner of said Section 27, T23S, R7W, S.M.P.M., Luna County, New Mexico, thence S 0°11'W, 2609.3 feet to the NE Corner of said Section 27; thence S 0°06'W, 1137.1 feet; thence S13°43'W, 624.70 feet; thence S85°32'30"W, 4691.8 feet to the Northwest Corner; thence S 0°08'W, 3379.0 feet to the Southwest Corner; thence S85°32'30"W, 5301.3 feet to the Point of Beginning, new survey, free consent and in accordance with the desire of the undersigned owners and proprietors thereof, and said owners do establish and dedicate to public use the streets and roads in said subdivision as shown on the foregoing plat.

STATE OF NEW MEXICO )  
COUNTY OF BERNALILLO )  
The foregoing instrument was acknowledged before me by Martin Athin and Lois Emma  
this 27 day of April, 1962  
My Commission expires 2-24-63  
Notary Public  
TRIPLE S LAND CORPORATION  
By: Martin Athin, Vice President  
Lois Emma, Assistant Secretary  
Attest: Lois Emma, Assistant Secretary

# PROJECTING *ARTLIES* INTO THE VOID

In 2006, Land Arts of the American West was asked to create an *ARTLIES* 'archive' at Cabinetlandia, a borrowed piece of land near Deming, New Mexico. The site is part of the Deming Ranchettes, desert scrubland throughout Luna County that was speculatively divided into 87,000 half-acre residential lots and sold in the 1960s. Bound by a major east-west railroad to the north, the voided subdivision containing our site is bisected by Interstate 10. Its original dirt roads have become faint shadows tracing property lines across an expanse of open horizon. This seemingly empty Chihuahuan Desert basin appears as a zone to traverse on your way between places. Void is the essential character of this place. Its transient nature and the ambulatory mode of Land Arts investigation prompted a dispersed response to the project. Instead of making a static container, our goal was to locate the actual issues within the landscape and archive the

stories, or lies, returned in that exchange. After considerable difficulty with the weather and local site conditions, we spent three days distributing the printed history of *ARTLIES* in and around Deming—finding, and being found by, people willing to talk. Through this process unpredictable events ensued, like the invitation of the Kretek twins, ranching sisters in their seventies, for our entire crew of seventeen to join them for an evening at the Rio Mimbres Country Club. Before dinner, Geraldine and Gertrude's good friend 'Hawk,' a lifelong cowboy and circus performer, treated us to a rope trick demonstration—in the dining room. Once all the issues were located, the recorded stories were edited and compiled for broadcast on the site. A portable tower was built to project *ARTLIES* into the void; to broadcast the stories of Deming into the desert, towards the passing traffic, and back into the landscape that produced them.

(clockwise from left) Chappell seeks shelter from the big rain under the cook tent.



Jarrold, Alex, and George survey the lot lines along Hopi Road.

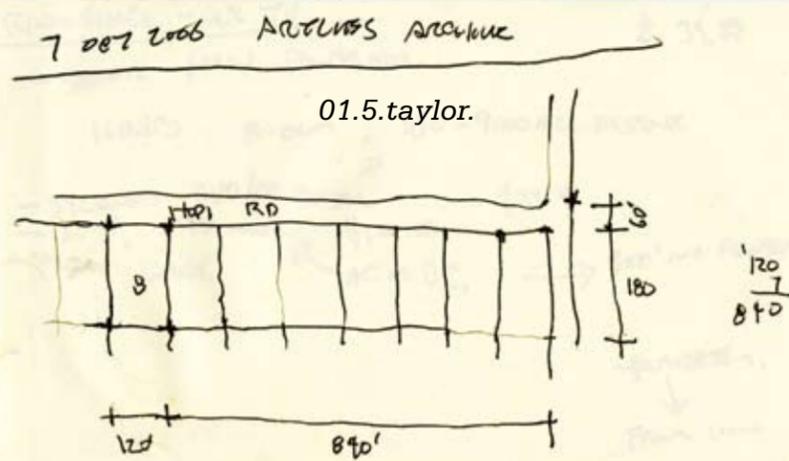
Tanisa, Chris, and George restocking the Cabinet Library with fresh issues and removing those molded shut.



Panorama of our camp at Cabinetlandia and the impending storm to the southwest.



Sketch locating the 120' by 180' Lot 8 within Block 4, by measuring from the USGS Quarter Section monument found at the corner of Hopi Road.



During 2003 in preparation of "Issue 10-Property," *Cabinet* magazine of Brooklyn, New York, acquired, sight unseen, Deming Ranchettes Unit 35, Block 4, Lot 8, a half-acre plot of land located about ten miles east of Deming, New Mexico. They named the property Cabinetlandia for use as a remote project space. In 2004 Matthew Passmore designed and built the Cabinet National Library consisting of a three-drawer filing cabinet set into the earth between a swale and berm. A 2005 guestbook entry by Steve Rowell indicates the susceptibility of the Library to local conditions and the complications of flooding, silting up, and mold. In the summer of 2006, I visited the site to assess its current situation and confirm the viability of its use for the *ARTLIES* archive.

*"Foucault: locate the space left empty by the author's disappearance, follow the distribution of gaps and breaches, and watch for the openings this disappearance uncovers."*

Jarrold Beck



16 Sabrina Gomez  
17 Barbara Hamilton

## 06 OCTOBER

Arrived at Cabinetlandia a day early due to threatening weather and washed-out roads at our prior site along the Gila River.

## 07 OCTOBER

Resupply food and water. Survey site to locate lot lines of the small rectangle within a faintly differentiated and seemingly empty expanse. Heavy afternoon rain inundates camp, flooding roads, the Cabinet Library, and preventing movement from site—stuck.

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01 James E Perego

02 Makayla Hallford

03 Ella Lawson

04 Larry

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06 Don Heacox

07 Wade Worrell

08 Candy

09 Specialist Daniel Jones

10 Tim Weber

11 Larry McDonalds

12 Don Ridder

13 Gloria Lopez

14 Gertrude & Geraldine Kretek

15 Juan Avalos

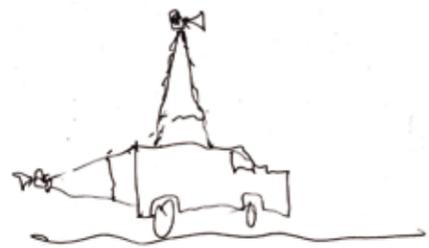
(clockwise from left)  
Greyhound shipping ticket.

Sketch of the projection tower and the van during transit and broadcasting.

All fifty-one issues of ARTLIES arrive at the Greyhound station, which is also the Washland Laundry.

Land Arts of the American West is a studio-based field study program dedicated to the investigation of land arts practices from precontact Native American to contemporary Euro-American cultures. Each fall we spend over fifty days in the field traveling about 8,000 miles to live and work throughout the southwest. Land Arts is a collaboration between Studio Art at the University of New Mexico and Design at the University of Texas at Austin, and is funded in part by the Lannan Foundation and Andrea Nasher.

In the October of 2006, we arrived at Deming after thirty-three days in the field, roughly two-thirds the way through our itinerary, visiting places like Chaco Canyon, the Center for Land Use Interpretation's Wendover complex, The Lightning Field and the Very Large Array. After our six days here, we headed south to Mata Ortiz, Mexico, and then completed our fieldwork at Otero Mesa.



(clockwise from left)  
Jimmy, Sean, Andrew, and Nicole during the organizational session at the Deming Visitor's Center.

'Hawk' demonstrating his handiwork with the lariat in the dining room of the Rio Mimbres Country Club.

Our hosts, Gertrude & Geraldine Kretek, with Delores, 'Hawk,' and Wade, after dinner at the Country Club.

Panorama of Cabinetlandia on October 8, the morning after the storm.



*"Movement defines this place, yet the space remains static. Routes of transportation straddle the land, as trains, airplanes, and automobiles move quickly past. But this place is not a destination – it lies somewhere between A and B, not a point, just a patch of scrappy desert that comes and then is gone so quickly as the highway speeds away."*

Cynthia Brinich-Langlois



**08 OCTOBER**

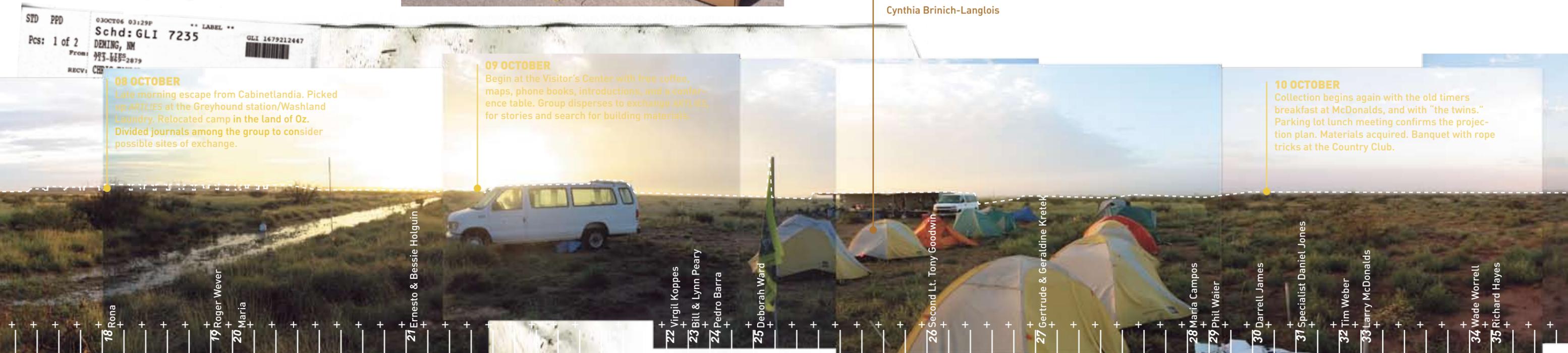
Late morning escape from Cabinetlandia. Picked up ARTLIES at the Greyhound station/Washland Laundry. Relocated camp in the land of Oz. Divided journals among the group to consider possible sites of exchange.

**09 OCTOBER**

Begin at the Visitor's Center with free coffee, maps, phone books, introductions, and a conference table. Group disperses to exchange ARTLIES, for stories and search for building materials.

**10 OCTOBER**

Collection begins again with the old timers breakfast at McDonalds, and with "the twins." Parking lot lunch meeting confirms the projection plan. Materials acquired. Banquet with rope tricks at the Country Club.



18 Rona

19 Roger Wever

20 Maria

27 Ernesto & Bessie Holguin

22 Virgil Koppes

23 Bill & Lynn Peary

24 Pedro Barra

25 Deborah Ward

26 Second Lt. Tony Goodwin

27 Gertrude & Geraldine Kretek

28 Maria Campos

29 Phil Waier

30 Darrell James

37 Specialist Daniel Jones

32 Tim Weber

33 Larry McDonalds

34 Wade Worrell

35 Richard Hayes



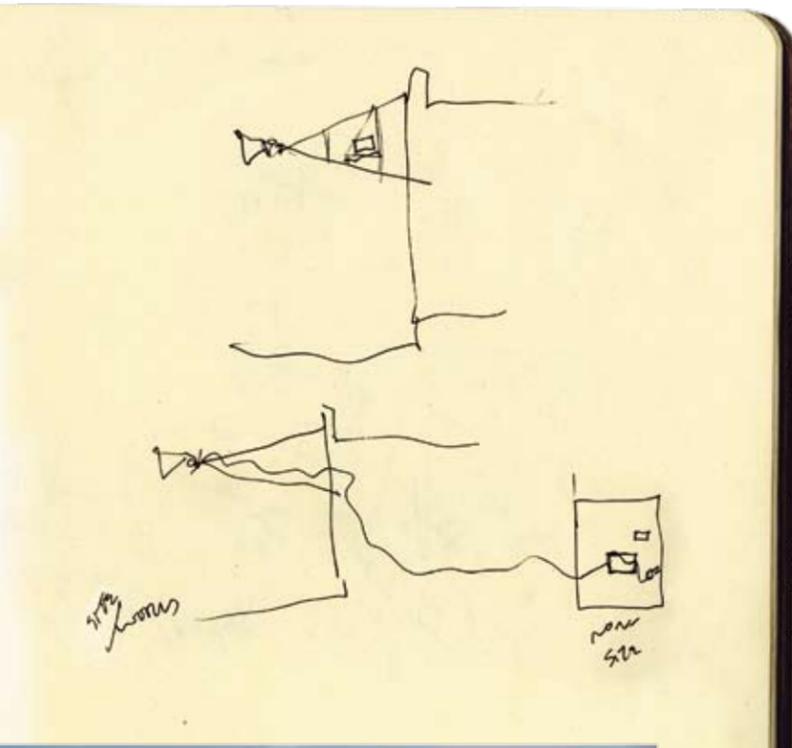
(clockwise from left)  
Jarrod and Christine  
constructing the  
control box.

George and Tanisa  
editing the recorded  
stories.

Site/non-site sketch  
of the field and gallery  
installation showing  
the exterior projection  
and interior control.

*"... the world is so huge why not stories from this town in the middle of nowhere in the middle of nowhere in the middle of absolutely the last place on earth anyone would go and they love us and we love them and how did we make this happen and thank god we did because it proves that you can do anything you want and damn it this is still America and how did we get so separated from this, our roots our people just everyday life and the time that endures it doesn't resonate any longer yet it still endures I guess in a cave or at least in the dark recesses of our collective minds we just don't share but this, this proves something..."*

Nicole E Danti



(clockwise from left)  
Bill Fox and Christine  
raising the projection  
tower on site.

Projecting ARTLIES into  
the void.

Exterior installation  
and interior control  
box at the Creative  
Research Lab.

Crossing the 'bridge  
to nowhere' over  
Interstate 10.

Panorama of ARTLIES  
being projected into  
the void.



The 2006 Land Arts participants involved in this project were students Jarrod Beck, Cynthia Brinich-Langlois, Christine Casaus, Nicole E Danti, Chappell Ellison, Sean Lopano, Alexandra Lopez Iglesias, Jimmy Luu, George Morrow, Joseph Mougel, Tanisa Sharif, Andrew Towl, Jennifer DePaolo VanHorn, and Emmalee Young; program co-directors Bill Gilbert and Chris Taylor; and guest William L. Fox.

Our collaborative project was produced under the direction of Chris Taylor. Special assistance in editing and compiling the sound came from George Morrow, and the graphic design of this layout from Jimmy Luu. Photographs by Chris Taylor, Chappell Ellison, Joseph Mougel, and Jarrod Beck.

**11 OCTOBER**

Compiling stories and building the broadcast tower at camp. Drive out to the site crossing the 'bridge to nowhere' to project into void. Drive back to camp after sunset with sound playing and light flashing. Pack up for Mexico.

36 Vivian Moore-Craver

37 Gary Gist

38 Mike Bowie

39 John

40 Dennis Horak

41 Jennifer Craig

42 Page Hewitt

43 Gary Gist

44 Roger Wever

45 Danielle Martinez

46 Justin Barnes

47 Dave Johnson

48 Liz

49 George Morrow

50 Sean

51 William L. Fox

