

# ARTIST WANTS A LITTLE BIT OF YOU FOR HIS CREATION

By **Mary Abbe Martin, Minneapolis-St. Paul Star Tribune; distributed by Scripps Howard News Service**

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**M** eet Stanley J. Shetka: carpenter, inventor, holography whiz, college professor, tornado enthusiast and founder of the World Art Project.

You can find him at the Minneapolis Institute of Arts, where the first phase of the World Art Project-which he refers to as "WAP"-occupies the Minnesota Artist Exhibition Program galleries. He`s present during museum hours through Dec. 4.

Or you can call 612-870-3035 and talk to him or to his Macintosh II computer, thereby contributing to WAP, an enterprise Shetka hopes eventually will connect everyone on the planet.

To quote the brown paper grocery bags he mailed worldwide to launch WAP last month, "When completed, World Art Project will be a permanent multiple-acre work of art created from materials received from every living person."

You can mail contributions to Shetka in the brown bags. Since the project began he has gotten heaps of stuff now strewn across the floor of one gallery: a pink-and-black marbled bowling ball, a Chinese umbrella, a 1957 automobile bumper, some fluorescent light tubes, a pair of red tennis shoes, a clerical collar, a doll, a bottle of beer, boxes of radio tapes, tongue depressors, telephone cords and wisdom teeth.

Shetka, associate professor and head of the sculpture department at Gustavus Adolphus College in St. Peter, Minn., plans to incorporate this stuff into the "the largest and most extensive public artwork ever created." The work will be installed in a house and buildings he intends to erect on 4 acres he owns near Webster, Minn.

It`s easy enough to imagine a sculptor`s use for a bowling ball-but wisdom teeth?

"In fact, I`m working on some figurative sculptures that need teeth, so they came along at the right time," said Shetka. "I`m building these mechanical human-looking figures that are as tall as I am (5-feet-8) and made from junk I`ve collected: cans, motor parts and rubber. Holograms will be embedded in the pieces, and the hands will be holding lights that illuminate the holograms. The head will be of plastic, but the ear, for example, might be a hologram of my ear. `Portraits from the past,` I call them."

A similar combination of high-tech electronics, low-tech whimsy, eccentric craftsmanship and just plain magic run through the institute's show. Take the tornado gallery, for example.

Quiet at first, the tornado room begins to hum when people enter, activated by electronic heat and motion sensors Shetka has placed around the room. Lightning flashes in a dollhouse-sized building poised at eye level atop a column. Thunder crackles. Suddenly the building, which contains a bedroom visible through a tall window, begins to flood with swirling yellow-green water. The room disappears as the water rises and a tornado-shaped whirlpool apparently sucks everything into its maw. Then with a great noisy slurping gurgle, the water recedes and the miniature bedroom re-emerges, dry and unruffled.

Across the gallery, the tornado strikes another room on another column, this one a dining room in which "killer tornado" movies from the 1950s are playing on a miniature television set. Made of beautifully polished wood and pressed paper, the tiny houses are decorated with friezes of tornados.

There's also a model for a "tornado trap," a modified mousetrap baited with a miniature house trailer.

"I believe that for creativity, you have to have a lot of chaos and out of that comes new creativity and new directions," Shetka explained. "That's where the tornado image comes from. Symbolically, it's very purposeful, because tornadoes create a path of chaos and mix everything up. Then you reorder things after the fact."

He expects to spend the next 15 to 20 years and an undetermined amount of money on WAP. To help pay for it he's asking contributors to send \$1 or its equivalent in the paper currency of their country, signed by contributors on the front margins and labeled "World Art Project."

Shetka says the signatures convert the currency into miniature

"billboards" for the project and involve the world's monetary system in an international esthetic endeavor rather than "war and destructive events." (A spokesman for the [U.S. Secret Service](#), which investigates currency violations, said it is not illegal to write on U.S. currency in this fashion.) The money will be used to buy art supplies and to gather contributions from underdeveloped countries. In addition to recording serial numbers from all the bills, Shetka plans to catalogue and save the other donations. Other items may not be incorporated in their original form, however.

He already has converted some offerings into holograms and embedded them in the walls of model buildings or bound them into books. Other contributions- poems or photographs, for example-might be recorded on walls or displayed in albums. He converted part of a copy of Botticelli's "Birth of Venus" into a medallion inset over the door of a tornado house.

The tornado house sculptures are models of the buildings that will house parts of the WAP. The concrete and

tin "igloo" filling one museum gallery is actually the domed top of a farm silo. Shetka sees it as the prototype for "a sound and film environment."

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