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Neil Goss

University of Kansas, naturaldyesks@gmail.com

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The Wild Civilized: An Environmental Art Studio Installed Outdoors in an Institutional Space

Neil Goss

naturaldyesks@gmail.com

www.neilgoss.com

When thinking about textiles and politics, one might find it hard to connect many dots. When in fact, textiles and politics have influenced one another since the beginning of their coexistence, working together and against each other for the impact of society. There are various examples spanning the globe—including the Tyrian purple of the Murex sea snail from Phoenicia and Rome, to the Chinese silk and Silk Road of Afro-Eurasia, the cotton and calico of India that Britain so desperately wanted, to the wealth of red held within the cochineal insect—have all controlled and dictated, politically and socially, who could wear what or use what. Politics control life forms as well as the actions and interactions of said life forms, both positively and negatively. In other words, politics shapes society and inevitably public perception. Textiles are direct extensions of life forms and are controlled by politics.

My intentions are to highlight the ways in which textiles, politics, nature and performance are intertwined while also suggesting that true artistic freedom can ensue through honoring political policy in order to achieve autonomy: a key factor in uninterrupted/impeded art creation. My use of textiles as an artistic medium allows me to dress unconventionally challenging societal norms, use wild plant matter in weavings possessing symbolic value while also being able to educate my fellow Americans about primitive fiber processes. Politics play an important role by being a controlling factor of my artistic freedom while also being a superior supporter and catalyst to the community. Nature is my source of inspiration and concept development, my art supply store, and my provider. Nature is the absence of human existence, yes they live together simultaneously, but true “wild” nature, does not include politics. It is free from politics. Nature and the Earth will go on forever, politics will die with humans. Through performances, I am able to bring my thoughts and passions to the people, transcending conventional guidelines and the monotony of contemporary technologically advanced day-to-day life.

In my senior year of studying textiles at the University of Kansas, I had plans to make large-scaled weavings and art works. I thought it would be a good idea to apply for an individual artist studio through the art department. There was one stipulation that greatly affected my possibility of achieving a studio; I was not enrolled in a directed study course. There was a loophole in the system, however, as I could not enroll in a directed study course because I was a textile student. The only departments that had directed study courses offered were painting, drawing, printmaking, and expanded media. I decided to apply anyway, but was not granted a studio space. This rubbed me the wrong way, as I felt mildly defeated by the political and bureaucratic system the art department had created. They were feeding into the high art/low art stereotype. For me, no was not an acceptable answer. I was not satisfied and began to discover new avenues to take to satiate my desires for a studio. I decided to create my own studio, one that I could live and work in freely and autonomously. This studio was to be outdoors in a natural space, a public space, and an institutional space. It was to be brought straight to the people. Typically

artists' studios have reputations of being hidden, mysterious or sacred spaces. I wanted to challenge that notion; the space does not make the artist, the artist makes the space. My studio was to be in the moment, opened at all times and accepting of any form of being including artists, anthropologists, chemists, botanists, scientists, doctors, animals, rocks, wind, men, women, children, republicans, democrats, cultural relativists and bigots.

It was also important for the studio to be outdoors so that people could see the esoteric things that I had been studying with my time in school, natural dyeing and back-strap weaving. These processes are so ingrained in historic human nature and the development of a species, yet a very small percentage of my fellow Americans knows anything about historic textile traditions. I don't blame them; it's not our fault. We have no handmade textile traditions other than quilt making, which used industrially produced fabrics. Our clothes, for the most part, were and are industry and machine made. Of course there are the traditional textiles of Native American tribes, but this is not directly connected to the European American or "western" culture. Thus, through discovering these textile traditions, I began creating my own culture as I felt I had no culture being an "American" child living in the new millennium driven by machines and digital technology. The studio was a pivotal symbol of the culture I wanted to create. Natural dyeing and backstrap weaving was key to discovering my future.

In the beginning, I knew three things. First, all the materials used in the studio were to be borrowed from the Earth and given back at the end of the installation's duration. Second, the installation would be done overnight in guerilla-fashion—no permission, just fruition. Third, the installation would last beyond the spring semester and go well into the summer. ****Idea that was all encompassing**** Knowing that I was going to build my own studio, I started exploring shapes, styles, concepts, materials, and purposes of different living spaces adapted or created by different cultures across the world. I am most inspired by the Native American way of life and respect greatly their relationship and interaction with land upon the Earth. My resulting shape would be that of a truncated, or decapitated, cone that was flipped upside down and planted into the Earth. The skeleton of the studio was to be made up of untreated fallen tree limbs ranging in height from 10-12 feet. I would collect limbs that had fallen for various reasons, wind fall/decay/natural occurrence or ones that had fallen due to humans cutting them down for land development. The limbs would be woven together with 115 yards of hand woven and naturally dyed hemp cloth. Inside the studio would be decomposition dye baths, dyed fiber, dyestuffs, plant matter, a skein winder, medicine, food and all of the life essentials. On the outside, a back-strap loom would be tied up at all times, there would be a spot to dry fiber, a fire pit, native plants would be grown to serve medicinal, edible, dye and fiber qualities as well as a food and herb garden that would provide for the university community. My ideas began pushing the final product beyond simply satiating my desires to build a studio; it was to be a sculptural installation serving the purposes of being a studio, a living space, a venue for performances, and a source for all simplicities necessary to sustain life. It was to be called the *Earthway Studio*, and it was to be a projection of my future lifeway.

After figuring out what it was I wanted to do, I did what any other college student would do; propose my ideas to my professors. I worked most closely with the head of the textiles department. She supported me greatly throughout the entire process. We had a long discussion about the project and her biggest concern was installing the studio in a guerilla fashion. She explained that the university's landscaping crew would tear down the studio, unless a proposal was accepted by KU, and more specifically through KU's Public Art Committee. Hearing her say that sent a chill throughout my body, as I wanted to build the studio without succumbing to the politics of the university. I understood where she was coming

from though, my ideas were not ones that could happen over night and after putting in a semester's work preparing, to have the studio torn down in one day, or even one week, seemed insane. So, after coming to the decision of attempting to gain institutional acceptance, she told me whom to contact to understand my tasks and responsibilities to propose the studio to the Public Art Committee. In that moment began a long road to gaining political and institutional acceptance by honoring the school's public art policy. Some say that it is easier to ask forgiveness than it is to ask permission, and I wholeheartedly agree. However, I tend to take the bumpy road, so it made sense that I would try to sway the committee to accept my non-conventional installation.

I began my walk down the road to political and institutional acceptance from KU. I started playing the political, "get to know ya game," and met a lot of very supportive people who have a lot of say in the university. Not to say that we all saw eye-to-eye on every topic of conversation, but we were all pleasant in dialogue. After speaking with numerous people involved with the Public Art Committee, my task was clear, to enter a proposal package that included five things: a drawing of what I would install, a model of the installation, a picture of the site the sculpture would be installed, a map of the site and a two-page verbal explanation of intentions. After completing my tasks for the committee, I turned in my proposal and the committee gave it a preliminary overview, so that when it came time to have a meeting about the installation, they would know what questions to ask me and what concerns to confront me with. When I showed up to the meeting at the art museum, I began seeing some faces that I had already met as well as some faces that I had not yet seen. These people were all walking in business/office clothing and I looked down at myself to see my torn flannel, my clay dyed hemp/cotton undershirt, and holey pants upon which my dirty clay hands sat. My first thought was, "how could I forget my business suit?"

We all entered the room together and sat down. Then, we commenced in introductory conversation and got straight down to business. Surprisingly, the committee had fewer questions about the *Earthway Studio* than I expected. They had no issues with my performances, my concepts or my desires to challenge contemporary human beings' ability to have tolerance for diversity. They seemed almost excited about it. Their only concerns were ones about technicalities and politically oriented issues. Things that did get brought up were the strength of the sculpture and whether or not it could handle the strong winds of Kansas, vandalism from the university students, and the duration of the installation. There were also concerns about landscaping being able to maintain their daily duties while having the sculpture installed as well as marking off utility lines due to my digging the studio's foundation, but the main issue at hand, was the duration of the installation.

I had proposed to have the installation up from the end of Spring break until the end of the following summer. It was important for the studio to be installed during the summer in order to have intense heat during the day to help aid in better colorant obtained from the decomposition dye baths. The degradation of the studio was also important. It would express degraded lifeways and cultures. Also the summer season would allow me to forage food and medicine for some of the performances that would be held at the studio, in addition to foraging dye, weaving and art materials. The installation would then be all encompassing of the bare essentials needed to live a simple and natural lifeway: shelter, food, medicine, clothing. However, there were some concerns with the studio being installed during the commencement celebration on campus. For those who don't know, commencement is between the spring and summer semesters. I never quite understood why this was such an issue, and am not sure that they knew either. Concerns like vandalism and potential harm to so many physical bodies on campus

were brought up as well as a lot of pictures would be taken at commencement and some of the people might not like it in their photos. To be honest, it was totally political. No provided reason was valid for not allowing the studio to be installed over the summer. I think they simply did not want a primitive structure inhabited by a loincloth-wearing eccentric on the day of graduation. Which is fine, it just would have nice to be told that plainly. Largely, the committee was supportive and respectful revealing an almost bend-over backward approach to help the arts, but, like everything, there were inherent differences. These differences allowed for an incredibly educating and enlightening experience.

After our discussion, I was asked to leave the room while to committee discussed my proposal and our conversation in private. One thought kept running through my mind, “please allow it to be installed throughout summer, please allow it to be installed throughout summer.” One of the members came and retrieved me from the hallway and they gave me the verdict. It was positive news. The studio could be installed in the desired location once Dig Safe was called to mark the utilities. It could be installed from the end of Spring Break until the week before commencement. There it was, I knew it was coming, compromise. I had to alter my concept, plans and intentions for the project because it could not be installed throughout the summer. Also, due to lack of time, I would not be able to start my community food, medicine and dye garden. The garden was essential to the project as it reflected self-sufficiency and the beautiful inherent relationship that exists between human and nature. Regardless, the situation was wholly positive. Instead of going to Cancun or the Rocky Mountains for Spring Break like some of my college counterparts, I stayed in Lawrence for Spring Break to install the sculpture. As opposed to escaping reality for a week and living a dream life, I worked hard in reality for a week to create a dream life that would last months and years to come, the *Earthway Studio*.

The first day of Spring Break, I started digging. The diameter of the studio was six feet. However, when I marked it on the ground, it looked a bit small, and I wanted to enlarge it. I wove extra hemp so I thought I could handle making the diameter a bit larger. The studio started with 18 holes dug down one-and-a-half feet into the Earth, in the shape of a circle. As soon as I dug a foot down, there was beautifully iron-rich red-orange clay. Out of the 18 holes, came enough clay to paint my face and body for the performances as well as enough to have a clay dye bath at the studio. Once the holes were dug, 10-12 foot tree limbs were placed in the ground and then filled back in with dirt, and pounded stable with my fists. After the 18 limbs were in place, I brought in about 800 lbs. of hand-dug clay to put at the base of the structure. The purpose of this was three-fold. One, “mortar” the limbs to the Earth for stability. Two, act as a vibratory cushion to absorb positive energy that spreads throughout the Earth sending it deep to the clay that lies beneath the soil which created a positive atmosphere within the studio. Three, be an ephemeral material that the Earth would claim back from the sculpture over time. The “crown” or front piece was then put on the studio. It consisted of three limbs tied vertically to a horizontal limb, wove together with hemp rope. The intention here was to create the doorway and a metaphor for the eye of the studio, to view back at the world.

By the fifth day of Spring Break, I was ready to weave the skeleton of the studio with the naturally dyed hemp strips. As I wove the basket, it started to become more and more relevant to me that it was a terrible idea to make the studio’s diameter larger than planned. I ran out of cloth before I could make my last pick the full circumference of the studio. Frustrated at myself, in one day, I went back to the floor loom, set up a six-yard warp, wove it and removed it from the loom to take outside and finish the studio. It was all I could have hoped for. Looking at the studio from a distance with the sun beginning to set behind it, I could see the final product of what half a year’s planning had become. The studio was

a woven basket, and in that moment, the vessel was empty. However, in the months to come, the vessel would be bursting full of positive energy harnessed from the Sun, Earth, humans, animals and every living thing that crossed its path. For the sculpture was not just a studio or an installation or a basket, but it was a source for harnessing energy. The kind of energy that is spread throughout the Earth, life form to life form, by means of the vibratory effect or the transference of positive energy that travels via the Earth and earthly matter. The studio sat in an opening in the trees so that the oculus of the studio had a clear view straight to the heavens, ideal for harnessing energy.

Over the weekend before school started back up, I went out to the studio and set the signage for the studio in the ground, the finishing touches to be done with the installation part of the project. The Public Art Committee commissioned signage for the studio so that the public had a better idea of what I was doing. This is another example of how gaining the institutions acceptance gave me the ability to spread my message and intentions to the public. The signage stated a brief artist statement, contact information and a thank you section but mainly posted the days and times of the scheduled performances that would be held at the studio.

School started up the next day and I was swamped with interviews for newspapers, magazines, the KU homepage, radio and TV. Because the school was aware of what I was doing and they approved of it, they wanted it getting a lot of publicity and exposure because it was different and ambitious. It was incredible to have so much support and interest from so many different groups of people, but at a certain point, it became a bit obnoxious, as I couldn't work in the studio because of so many distractions and meetings to go to. It was flattering but at the same time, frustrating. It took a bit of time to get used to, but a balance was soon reached between talking about what I'm doing and doing what I'm talking about.

The performances began as soon as school started back up. I had scheduled five performances for the installation's duration and they were, in chronological order: *The Earth Run*, *Creating/Blessing the Dyebaths*, *The Earth Dance*, *Backstrap Weaving*, and *Primitive Painting*. These performances served many purposes. Primarily, it set up a day and time that I would be in the studio for people to come and view what I was doing, how I was making art and how I was living life. They highlighted ways in which humans can live with the Earth utilizing the Earth as a grocery store, art supply store, pharmacy, playground, and life sustainer. They were also ways to bring textile and art processes to the people in order to educate or enlighten them on the process of fiber/art production. Lastly, the performances served as a metaphor for the future that I desire and will some day live. I embodied my alter ego, SunnyTreeSpider when I performed. Before and after each performance, I would partake in a meditation session to enter and exit the proper frame of mind for SunnyTreeSpider/the performance. Essentially, the performances allowed me to live the life of another being or lifeway. By escaping the confines of daily conventional existence, I was able to create art that was pure and true to my reactions and interactions with the nature, people and atmosphere that surrounded me. The autonomy allowed for supported, yet uninterrupted and free-flowing art production. Keep in mind that I was working in the studio daily as Neil Goss, and had the opportunity to teach countless people how to backstrap weave, spin yarn, and live reciprocally with the land exposing different uses for plants and earth matter. This balance between Neil and Sunny was key to the studio's diversity being accepted, as people felt more sociable when I was Neil and not Sunny.

The first performance was the *Earth Run*. This performance was the "opening reception" of the installation. It was a cold day, so cold that coats were necessary and worn by everyone else. However, I

walked outside in what I would wear in every performance, my 100% wool loincloth that was partially hand-spun and partially dyed with birch leaves. My face was painted with clay from under the studio while my feet and back were bare. I entered my meditative state and opened my eyes to the lifeway of SunnyTreeSpider. I greeted the viewers and thanked them for coming and supplying their support and positive energy. After that, I began thanking the plants, trees, animals, earth, and air that surrounded me. I then started jogging, and that jog turned into an energizing run. I ran from the wooded area that housed the *Earthway Studio* down Jayhawk Boulevard (the road where the students were walking who just got out of class) to Marvin Grove, then to Potter's Lake and back home to the studio. On that Run I collected dye and weaving material to use at the studio. The things I collected were Osage orange bark (for dyeing), catalpa pods and willow fronds (for weaving). The *Earth Run* was a visual example of something human beings could do instead of being stimulated by artificial technological devices, consuming synthesized food and medicine, wearing synthetic clothing while living within synthetic walls breathing synthetic air, absorbing synthetic light. Like all the other performances that would follow, this one ended with a meditation session to ease back into the daily life of Neil.

The second performance was called, *Creating/Blessing Dyebaths*. In this performance I created decomposition dye baths using dye material that I foraged on campus or ones that I had lying around from personal collecting or being gifted. I both ground the material with my hands or a mortar and pestle that I had. I held each dyestuff in my hand and thanked it for giving its life for my selfish desire to use it as a dyestuff. Some dyestuffs were already "dead" and I just picked them up off the ground, but I still took them the Earth. As I thanked each dyestuff, I also thanked the Earth and the Creator for fabricating such materials. I assured the Earth that I was borrowing the materials, and that each time the Sun would see the fibers that I had dyed, that it could take back as much as it wanted or needed to. I did this for each of the eight dyestuffs, which included – Osage orange bark, sumac leaves, sumac berries, onionskins, acorns, clay (from under the studio), Yerba Mate tea, and cochineal. A handmade salt-fired stoneware-dyeing crock was ready for each prepared dyestuff to be placed in. I then gathered two 5-gallon buckets and my bamboo staff and walked to Potter's Lake. I scooped water into the two buckets and put one at either end of the bamboo and walked it back to the studio that lied at the top of the hill. Once re-entering the studio, the water was blessed as I thanked the lake and Mother Earth for providing the water. The crocks were then filled with water and I held each one to the heavens and asked the Earth and Sun for the proper energy to create a healthy dye bath full of chromophores and color. A few days later I entered urine into each crock to aid in decomposition and colorfastness. I also place a skein of hemp in each bath. The crocks were placed to sit for months to come and allow the Sun to slowly cook out the color.

On Earth Day - a large celebration awaited at the studio, the third performance - *The Earth Dance*. I wanted to give the Earth a gift of energy and great thanks, to show how much appreciation human beings have for it. On the day of the performance, I had two dancers from KU dance with me in my performance. We walked out to greet the Earth and to greet the day. When we arrived the band of drummers were making beats, people were waiting to see the celebration and there were handfuls of cameras and camcorders. This presence of digital technology was a grand sign of the institutional support that I had been awarded to the studio and myself. I felt great support in what I was putting my energy into. The dancers and I got into position to begin our dance and thanks to the Earth. We were on our knees lying over our legs with our faces in the grass. The drumbeat started in slow and steady. Our bodies began to slightly pulse as a calm and steady heart would beat. We then brushed our hands over

the grass as if we were broadcasting seed. Our bodies sprouted from the Earth and rolled towards one another meeting at a central core. Here, hands united, we arose from the soil that gave us life and began to generate energy by slowly dancing in a circle. As the beat of the drum increased, so did our beat of dancing as well as our energy levels. We cultivated as much energy as we could and then aimed towards entering the wooded area where the *Earthway Studio* lied. After entering the space we broke loose in a chaotic, scattered dance, keeping beat with the fast and wild drums. The other two dancers made their way into the studio to bring the energy we gathered straight into the vessel to be placed deep the soil and throughout the Earth. I danced around the studio three more times to gather any last minute energy. Once I made my way back to the front entrance, the girls exited the studio and ran into the tree as I shut the door to the studio, trapping the energy inside the studio. When the bamboo staff hit the ground, the drummers stopped. I thanked the members of the audience for coming to the Earth Day celebration and for giving forth positive energy. Earth Day started out overcast and chilly and remained that way until the end of the performance. Fifteen minutes after the dance, the sun broke through the clouds and warmed the day.

The fourth performance, *Backstrap Weaving*, was yet again, on a cold day. After my meditation ritual, I tied up my loom to the eccentric-growing evergreen that was to the north of the studio. As I sat down to tie myself into the loom, I began taking deep powerful breaths and exhaling strongly towards the sky. The loom that I was weaving with was the first backstrap loom I had ever made. The warp of the loom was 100% hemp. The tie chord and lease string were made of acrylic. Like the 5-gallon buckets used in the dye bath performance, I used a synthetic material that is from contemporary industry driven America. This reflects that sometimes it is more efficient to say, carry a 5-gallon plastic bucket of water than a 5-gallon ceramic vessel of water. Also, the material is readily available from overproduction. In this situation, I got the acrylic yarn from the reclaim bin in the textiles department. As I was sitting there breathing, I began to weave. I was weaving with catalpa pods and willow fronds. One section of catalpa would be woven about 3 or 30 picks long then I would switch to the willow and go back and forth. The concept for this piece came through my understanding of plant history. I started contemplating the intersection of mis-translated history, political war, fiber production and plant biology. The catalpa tree got its name from the Catawba tribe, a Southeastern tribe. A scientist taking notes on the tree when staying with the tribe mistranscribed the name Catawba, creating what we know the tree as today, catalpa. Therefore, in the weaving the catalpa pods represent specifically the Catawba tribe and broadly, Native American Indian tribes. The willow fronds were used for a similar reason to why I used the bamboo (used in other weavings created at the studio), the biology of the plant. Both plants have a very invasive root system that leads the plant to being very prolific but not of great desire in areas that are lacking or fighting for native plants. Therefore, in the weaving the bamboo and willow are used to represent specifically the invasion of the European in North America and broadly, invasive advanced cultures pushing their ethnocentric viewpoints upon traditional and primitive cultures which can lead to genocide. The hemp was used as the warp or binder of these plant materials, being a metaphor for saving both nature and human. Hemp has the ability to save both plant and human, if we only allow it to. As I sat in the cold, I thought about this conflict of cultures while looking around me at the current moment. The repetitive action of lifting the string heddle, pushing forward the shed roll, throwing picks and packing them allows for reflection and meditation. I find it hard to believe that we as a people have gone so far from the land and have become so violently supportive of our own beliefs to where we disregard an opposing approach to living life. However, it is moments like backstrap weaving that allows me to be okay with this factual history, as in that moment, I was rooted deep like a tree possessing the stability of a mountain as I wove.

The fifth performance, *Primitive Paintings*, acted as the “closing reception” for the studio. Before the performance began, I did a final Earth run spreading energy once again across the campus, and saying goodbye to the friends that I had made over the months. Once I returned to the studio, a small crowd waited as well as my band of drummers. I welcomed the guests and thanked them for their support and understanding. The drummers began to create rhythm, and in front of the doorway to the studio, I unrolled the three warps that I wove on the backstrap loom at the studio. Collectively, they were about eight feet tall and five feet wide. I began to dance with my bamboo staff then procured my first painting material from the studio, aged urine. It is used as a mordant to assist in color fastness and color absorption. I poured three jars of urine on the warps and again, I danced. I would use one dyestuff at a time, procuring each crock from the studio and thanking the heavens for creating such potent dye liquors. First, was the cochineal. I grabbed my paintbrushes, which were fallen ash and willow limbs with fresh green leaves. From each crock, I would pull out the skein of hemp and show it to the audience, showing the colors that came from each plant. The skeins were then hung on the door of the studio. After painting one layer of each dyestuff on the warps, I again danced. Then I retrieved three hemp canvases from the studio that I wove earlier in the semester on a floor loom. One was bound for a tie-dye effect and the rest were left flat. I placed the canvases to the south of the studio and began painting them as well. Layer by layer, the paintings were built up over time using the tree paint brushes as well as my hands, piling plant matter onto the painting and throwing the liquor around. After finishing with the paintings, I danced again, for a long time. I danced around, beside and on top of the paintings, bringing physical energy into the paintings themselves. Once I sensed an overwhelming amount of energy, I trapped it inside the studio, giving it to the Earth. The space was then cleaned up, one crock at a time, again thanking Mother Earth and Father Sky for healthy dyebaths. The paintings were rolled up, and the performance was over. I again thanked the viewers for attending and bringing positivity and assured them, that I could not have done what I wanted to without their help.

Remember how I wanted to create a community garden at the *Earthway Studio* but was not able to because the committee did not grant me the summer? I wasn't able to do it for the studio, but in the end, I was able to do it because of the studio. I received an email from a woman who worked at the KU Native Medicinal Plant Research Garden (she got my email from the signage KU purchased for my installation). She was inquiring to see if I would like to do any installations or performances at the garden. I told her I was interested and also that I had wanted to start a dye/community garden. Her and the head of the medicinal plant project were both thrilled about the idea. I honored school policy, and was denied my desire to create a garden on campus. However, since I did honor the institution's system, the garden manifested itself, this could not have happened had I installed the studio without permission. The garden started out as a Kansas native plant dye garden. The plants grown were *Baptisia australis*, *Rudbeckia hirta*, *Coreopsis tinctoria*, *Asclepias incarnata*, *Bidens polylepis*, *Aster novae-angliae*, *Helianthus annuus*, and *Phytolacca americana*. The garden has biannual tours and on average 75-100 people attends. When these garden tours occur I am able to have a dialogue with that many people and talk to them about natural dyeing with plants and insects, discuss the fiber properties of certain plants, while also speaking about the edible and medicinal qualities the plants possess. The garden has now expanded beyond a native dye garden to include some historical or international dyes like *Polygonal tentorium*, *Rubbia sanctorum*, *Reseda luteal*, and *Lycos's Europeans*.

It boosted my career and future to honor political and institutional policy, for my personal situation. I don't believe that it is the answer for everybody, but it worked beautifully for me. Yes, I had to compromise some of my pure and initial desires for the project, but I was granted the freedom to install

the studio for an unusually long period of time on the university's land, with their open arms support that led to satisfying all of my initial desires. Not only was I awarded autonomy to have a plein air studio, but I was also awarded university and community wide support. My message got more attention by being accepted by KU than it would have had I installed the sculpture in guerilla fashion. Lots of people want to live free of the system, and I don't blame them. However, to be free of the system in contemporary life, you must first understand and reason with the system before true freedom will ensue. I was granted freedom, and my dreams became reality. Through textiles, politics, nature and performance, my dreams became reality.