

FOOD-WATER-LIFE --- LUCY+JORGE ORTA

The work of Lucy+Jorge Orta explores the major concerns that define the 21st century: biodiversity, environmental conditions, climate change and exchange among peoples.

At the same time, this work embodies the philosophy that steers their pioneering art practice, 'the ethics of aesthetics.' As heirs to the practice of social sculpture, formulated by Joseph Beuys in the 1960s, the Ortas' works are, in a sense, relics of their own function — beguiling assemblages that are the platform for the preparation of food, mechanisms that actually purify water, and elements that they created for their 2007 expedition to Antarctica and that are part of an effort to amend Article XIII of the 1948 Universal Declaration of Human Rights. The works in this exhibition are metaphors-in-action, constructions that perform the very actions they interrogate.

Obviously, these humorous, jerrybuilt contraptions are not the most efficient means to purify, prepare and transport food and water, or to launch a world-wide humanitarian effort, but in their ability to actually function, they gain power as works of art created to move us to awareness and action. The artists have created a unique visual language through which they tackle the major global issues affecting our lives and the precarious position of this planet.

The Ortas have opened their archives, allowing access to their prodigious bodies of work. All works of art in the exhibition have been generously lent by the artists.

Ginger Gregg Duggan and Judith Hoos Fox, Curators
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This traveling exhibition has been organized by the Tufts University Art Gallery, Medford, Massachusetts.