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The Thornton biennial: The Kruszka pavilion: the 29YR apology

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The Thornton Biennial: The Kruszka Pavilion: The 29YR Apology

by

Ethan Kruszka

A non-thesis project submitted in partial fulfillment
of the requirements for the degree of
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THE 2004 THORNTON BIENNIAL
Director's Statement

It is with great pleasure that I welcome you to the inaugural exhibition of the Thornton Biennial. This new art event was created to showcase art in a new place and highlight the latent talent in rural Iowa by featuring the art of past and present Thornton residents. In an event such as this, the focus is on the community as well as the artist. Town citizens not formally exhibiting are invited to take part in the Biennial by attending, interacting, and engaging in discourse. The participation of area residents envelops the festival with a contagious energy. I am encouraged by the early interest and enthusiasm in the Biennial.

This year’s inaugural event is comprised of a solitary pavilion featuring the artwork of Ethan Kruszka, a native of Thornton and founding member of the international art group the Fluff Constructivists. Kruszka will be debuting The 29 Year Apology, an interactive mixed-media installation. The Apology was created specifically for the occasion of his homecoming as an artist, after reflecting on growing up in the rural Midwest and having traveled a great distance – both geographically and culturally – since his boyhood.

I look forward to hearing your reactions to this year’s work as well as your thoughts on the future of the festival. Preparations are already underway for the 2006 Thornton Biennial. A steering committee is forming, the selection process is beginning, and fund-raising is underway. For the Biennial’s next installment, an internationally-exhibited artist will be invited to participate in addition to spotlighting local work.

Please enjoy the show! It is your engagement that ensures the success of the Thornton Biennial this year and for years to come.

Nicole Kruszka
One hundred thousand gallons of water. This quantity listed as a component of a contemporary work would surely evoke awe and wonder, easily turning most major venues into aquariums. A gallerist would proclaim that artist X had quite miraculously harnessed the might and sublime power of nature... “an amazing undertaking, a work that speaks of ubiquitousness and the epic of the sea.” This quantity listed as the volume of a water tower rarely warrants the same enthusiasm and excitement.

August nineteenth 2004, Thornton, Iowa Mayor Richard ‘Pidge’ Dorenkamp made the public announcement that the town has increased its water capacity by four and a half times as a result of a new tower and that citizens would now experience greater water pressure. Lastly, he commented that the improvement had been made to allow for future growth of the tiny rural community. Never mind that the majority of businesses had closed doors two decades earlier, that the public high school had been forced to consolidate and bus students to a neighboring town sixteen years prior, or that the census bureau had reported a quiet decline in the population of the town since 1950. Despite these facts, ignoring foresight and arguably common sense, he made the comment. It was beautiful, a statement of complete idiocy or unequivocal optimism and perseverance.

Simultaneously, the Thornton Biennial is founded. A contemporary art exhibition designed to stimulate cultural activity and generate revenue for the town. Thornton has no previous experience with the formal display of art. The closest example is a distant relative of public art, a large boulder with an attached plaque commemorating the 1985 burial of a centennial time capsule proudly exhibited at the entrance to the town hall. It is important to note that knowledge and experience were rather assertively dismissed by the Biennial committee as unnecessary and avoidable obstacles, “… a hindrance to the future of a great event.”

Why? Why does Thornton need or want a biennial? Why should a contemporary art exhibition take place in Thornton? The critic’s questions arise with such immediacy that they almost preface the conception of the Biennial. As the curator of the inaugural event I am moved to offer a few possible interpretations in defense.

The first interpretation is based on the realization of several phenomena demonstrating modern contextual shifts that are seemingly independent and yet inextricably linked to contemporary art.
The invention of Alexander Supertramp aka Christopher McCandless, chronicled in Jon Krakauer’s book, Into the Wild, was a dedicated and obsessive creation of alter ego and fantasy as well as an investigation of conviction and vulnerability. The item being examined here is the actual life of Christopher McCandless, a 25 year old, Emory University graduate from an upper-middle class family, who was best known for walking into the Alaskan wilderness and dying. If one avoids the much-hyped tragedy and focuses on the intentions and psychological development of McCandless, another story emerges, one that is indebted to Allan Kaprow’s “blurring of art and life”, German performance art of the 1970s and avant-garde theatre. In short, McCandless becomes a hybrid character whose life is scripted by his favorite authors: Thoreau, Dostoyevsky, Tolstoy and London. The identity formed, Alexander Supertramp, was an idealist, asceticist, romantic and adventurer.

Every winter in Littleton, Colorado, Accounting Professor Tim Lindquist hosts an event entitled Christmas Past. The annual event features the wildly obsessive holiday decoration of his dimly lit basement and an abundance of cookies. The exhibit features a forest of lighted artificial trees mounted in a concrete floor and illuminated X-mas characters from past and present. The trees fill the space to a point of near suffocation. On the perimeters of the basement, the most remarkable visual moments happen; the decorations merge seamlessly with the basement’s regular inhabitants: a saw, a pick-axe, a cardboard standout of a 1980s Sylvester Stallone action hero type, an exercise bike, an old desk, etc.

In Salt Lake City, Utah, early July 2003 Black Entertainment Television’s video transmission had been replaced by a still image of two lanky white girls in bathing suits, wearing orange lifejackets. The ladies were standing in a photo studio replete with photoflood lights and a tropical backdrop, their arms outstretched and their heads thrown back. The audio being broadcast was indistinguishable from the normal network programming, a sitcom conversation, studio laughter followed by commercials. Any attempt at changing channels was fruitless, I found myself making a hypnotic and recurrent pilgrimage to the pirated BET.

It is worth noting that, regardless of the formal designation of these events as art, they hint at knowledge of staged performance or exhibited gesture. Occurring independent of the traditional art space they begin to explore new spaces for production, display and consumption and in these spaces, greater juxtapositions and contextual shifts occur. These three events can be seen as analogous to the inception of a Thornton Biennial and indicative of a growing trend in creative culture that prefers act to object and concept to form. The art historical lineage of this work can be traced from the efforts of the Dadaists, Pataphysicians and later to the irrational juxtapositions favored by the Surrealists.

A second attempt at validation is the Thornton Biennial as a gesture of critique and analysis. According to this logic, the Thornton Biennial is actually a miniature satirical version of the high profile Whitney, Venice or Documenta events. For example, it wouldn’t be a far reach to suggest that the Kruszka pavilion is a snap at the current controversy surrounding the privatization of the American pavilion in Venice. Or to suggest that the Thornton Biennial in its small world approach is a reflecting pool mirroring incestuous associations, nepotism and provincialism rampant in the contemporary art world. To think of it, I dated this year’s exhibiting artist, Ethan Kruszka in 1988. The press release for the event boasts of “the dynamic creative potential in Thornton” and features almost exclusively past and present residents of the town of 400. This micro biennial scoffs at the idea of the global biennial and confirms the notion of biennial saturation.

A final interpretation, a trusted colleague commented that the Thornton Biennial sounds akin to a movie about saving the orphanage. He referenced several Hollywood storylines that involve characters going to extraordinary and often bizarre measures to save their cherished institutions. I was sold. It fit too perfectly; the corn syrup and cheese reserved for stories about rural villages. At this point it is difficult to ascertain where the imitation occurs with art or with life. Nevertheless, the theory has substance. It is the most popular reasoning among the local population. In The Chit Chat Cafe or Dave’s Bar and Grill there are frequent discussions of plans to “push a few breaths” into the body of the barely conscious town. The rational conversations commonly move back and forth from reinvigorating the farm economy to finding ways to import young professionals and families. Fairly regularly though, out of desperation and/or great hope, residents make wild suggestions and proclamations. Thornton now has five times the water they need and a contemporary art fair.

Carrie Anderson
Curator
I would first like to begin with an apology to all who intend to visit, and/or live in this fabulously boring town. To be quite honest “town” is hardly how you would refer to a place such as this; a better choice of wording might be village or settlement. Because everywhere you go people are related either by marriage or blood, but there is no need to pass judgment, for this is to be a thanksgiving manifesto, or so it is told... It’s hard to honestly state that I am truly thankful, because there are so few things that I take pleasure in that come from place. Cold weather and cold people is all we are reduced to. If we are to be the heart of America, it is no wonder so many deaths occur a year, the suicide rates must be at an all time high. Because this place is like a cold, isolated hell that no one seems to know about, no one seems to truly care we exist.

Stereotypically Iowans are less capable in the class room than the general public, yet this doesn’t alarm me. Look at our school systems they consist of roughly four districts combined. Sadly enough, our school the best thing, wait the only thing this town has to offer anyone is being closed down. The only thing that drew others into this naught of a town is now to be done away with. So now what? They think they can just mount a new water tower as false advertisement, and lacerate what character we have left?

I should bargain with the town’s people, and see if they won’t let me fashion the old water tower in my own backyard, just to let everyone know that the true MT still prevails.

I have found myself in yet another state of boredom...Thornton, a town built upon pure dullness.

Jordan Delaney (b.1990)
Table DP-1. Profile of General Demographic Characteristics: 2000

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Geographic Area: Thornton city, Iowa</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>[For information on confidentiality protection, nonsampling error, and definitions, see text]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Subject Number Percent</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>------------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total population .................. 422 100.0%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

SEX AND AGE

| Male .................. 209 49.5 |
| Female ................. 213 50.5 |
| Under 5 years ........... 13 3.1 |
| 5 to 9 years .......... 26 6.2 |
| 10 to 14 years ......... 31 7.3 |
| 15 to 19 years ........ 36 8.5 |
| 20 to 24 years .......... 22 5.2 |
| 25 to 34 years ........ 36 8.5 |
| 35 to 44 years ........ 16 3.8 |
| 45 to 54 years ........ 48 11.4 |
| 55 to 59 years .......... 15 3.6 |
| 60 to 64 years .......... 17 4.0 |
| 65 to 74 years .......... 48 11.4 |
| 75 to 84 years .......... 12 2.9 |
| 85 years and over ...... 12 2.9 |

Median age (years) .......... 42 0 (X) |

18 years and over .......... 332 78.7 |

Male .................. 165 39.1 |
Female .................. 167 39.6 |

21 years and over .......... 309 73.2 |
62 years and over .......... 118 28.0 |
65 years and over .......... 109 25.8 |
75 years and over .......... 47 11.1 |

Female .................. 62 14.7 |

RACE

| One race .................. 422 100.0 |
| White .................. 416 98.6 |
| Black or African American ...... - |
| American Indian and Alaska Native .. 1 0.2 |
| Asian .................. - |
| Asian Indian .................. - |
| Chinese .................. - |
| Filipino .................. - |
| Japanese .................. - |
| Korean .................. - |
| Vietnamese .................. - |
| Other Asian 1 .................. - |
| Native Hawaiian and Other Pacific Islander .. 1 0.2 |
| Native Hawaiian .................. - |
| Guamanian or Chamorro ... - |
| Samoan .................. - |
| Other Pacific Islander 2 ........ - |
| Some other race 3 .......... 3 0.7 |
| Two or more races 4 .......... 2 0.5 |
| Race alone or in combination with one or more other races: 3 | Total population: 422 100.0% |
| White .................. 417 98.8 |
| Black or African American ...... 1 0.2 |
| American Indian and Alaska Native .. 1 0.2 |
| Asian .................. 1 0.2 |

Native Hawaiian and Other Pacific Islander .................. 1 0.2 |
Other race .................. 3 0.7 |

Subject Number Percent

HISPANIC OR LATINO AND RACE

Total population .................. 422 100.0 |
Hispanic or Latino (of any race) .................. 55.2 |
Mexican .................. 140 10.2 |
Puerto Rican ................. 1 0.2 |
Cuban .................. - |
Other Hispanic or Latino ... - |
Not Hispanic or Latino ... 417 98.8 |

White alone .................. 414 98.1 |

RELATIONSHIP

Total population .................. 422 100.0 |
In households .................. 422 100.0 |
Householder .................. 183 43.4 |
Spouse .................. 109 25.8 |
Child .................. 114 27.0 |
Own child under 18 years .... 84 19.9 |
Other relatives .................. 3 0.7 |
Under 18 years .................. 2 0.5 |
Nonrelatives .................. 13 3.1 |
Unmarried partner ................. 8 1.9 |
In group quarters .................. 4 |

EDUCATIONAL ATTAINMENT

Population 25 years and over .................. 295 100.0 |
Less than 9th grade .................. 14 4.7 |
9th to 12th grade, no diploma .......... 19 6.1 |
High school graduate (includes equivalency) .... 125 42.4 |
Some college, no degree .................. 70 23.7 |
Associate degree ................. 16 5.4 |
Bachelor's degree .................. 47 15.9 |
Graduate or professional degree ........ 5 1.7 |
Percent high school graduate or higher .......... 89 2.9 |
Percent bachelor's degree or higher .......... 17 6.6 |

EDUCATION OCCUPANCY

Total housing units .................. 193 100.0 |
Occupied housing units ............... 183 94.8 |
Vacant housing units ................. 10 5.2 |
For seasonal, recreational, or occasional use .......... 3 1.6 |
Homeowner vacancy rate (percent) .................. 2 0.0 |
Rental vacancy rate (percent) ............... 5 1.1 |

HOUSING TENURE

Occupied housing units ............... 183 100.0 |
Owner-occupied housing units ............... 146 79.8 |
Renter-occupied housing units ............... 37 20.2 |
Ave. household size of owner-occupied units ............... 3 28 (X) |
Ave. household size of renter-occupied units ............... 3 20 (X) |

- Represents zero or rounds to zero. (X) Not applicable. |
1 Other Asian alone, or two or more Asian categories. |
2 Other Pacific Islander alone, or two or more Native Hawaiian and Other Pacific Islander categories. |
3 In combination with one or more of the other races listed. The six numbers may add to more than the total population and the six percentages may add to more than 100 percent because individuals may report more than one race. |
Source: U.S. Census Bureau, Census 2000. |
Thornton is a small community of close to 500 located in North Central Iowa. With so many small towns struggling to exist, my town continues to be quite a busy place.

I enjoy walking up town to the post office and being greeted by many friendly people. We have a nice café which is called the “Chit Chat”. Where people gather over coffee and should there be someone in need we come together to help one another.

We still have our school, a beautiful golf course and club house, and several active business places. Our library is located just north of our little park and east of town we have another beautiful park. Yes, I am happy to live in this small progressive community.

Beulah Schmalle (b. 1923)
Communication art.

When writing, I tell myself that I will immediately delete the writing upon its completion. Not so much because I fear its contents or the repercussions of having written it but because it feels too permanent and polarizing if I leave it. A lack of commitment? Maybe. Thinking of it as a lack of commitment seems too easy though, as to say one that cannot decide between soup and salad at lunch in some way lacks dedication to either liquid or solid foods. In this instance “commitment” sounds out of context. Commitment involves significance and ideals. And even if we extend this example to the actual meal and one’s decision to eat or not eat lunch it is still negligible as far as commitment is concerned even though we partake in it daily. I don’t write daily. On second thought I do. I think there is a point here. Perhaps the question of commitment extends beyond the soup and the writing to the internal reasoning process that is required to actively pursue either of those endeavors. The point I am making here but not articulating very well is that my commitment is to perpetuating a state of neutrality/nullification through somewhat tangential and irrational logic.

And again this is incorrect terminology.

Another attempt at clarification via art historical means might invoke the erased de kooning, Beuy’s declaration that “the silence of Duchamp was overrated” or Bas Jan Ader’s In Search of the Miraculous. The previous attempt at clarification is muddied with personalities, it is perhaps better to say that I am committed to the idea of the disappearing act, the entire act. The rabbit is on stage and then the rabbit disappears and then the not knowing whether or not the rabbit will reappear. And still this is flawed because it is reduced to illusion. Another difficult realization, I am committed to language but I do not trust language.

A love story.

In my greener pasture hours I secretly dream of being a painter again. Obsessively repeating organic shapes on a canvas until I have successfully created the illusion of layered space, rendering for hours the perfect shimmering blend of colors required to imitate light falling on a surface or turning a few tricks (after all I know these materials so I can bask in the warmth of familiarity). I leave my paintings up and “live with them” for awhile until I decide days, weeks or months later that I am finished with them. At that time I quickly document this very tangible productivity and give it to an acquaintance to adorn their home. They love me. I know because they tell me and they feel good because they finally have something to offset the bookcase.

When I return to my studio, I want to paint. I want the same feeling. I want to do it all over again. I want to address the same motifs. I want to render something common maybe a rabbit or a sparrow, a plastic outlet plate or an ashtray and I want to paint with the color gray, a dull gray surface with a tiny pink line.
I’m leaving and never coming back (ever I promise).

Alaska is the last vestige of American wilderness.

This statement makes me want to be there. To visit, not to live. I find living in any geographical location bothersome. I am in a place for awhile and then I want to leave. I attribute this not to a quixotic desire to be nomadic or even to boredom but rather an acceptance and affirmation of being a tourist. Keep in mind that tourism is not a perfect concept. There are flaws. For example, depth and breadth of place are not obtained. The stay is too short. Certain specifics are lost or unknown, retained and utilized only by the more permanent residents of that place. A related problem is deciding the duration of visit, activity to be done there and level of investigation. A question of greater urgency and difficulty follows, where to go next? The answer is usually dictated by the previous concerns and a fair amount of chance.

The weather is always perfect. Proponents of tourism often say things like that. They are of course right. I will vouch for their honesty. They, like me, believe that the world is an amazing place filled with millions of fantastic destinations to explore: the Netherlands, Serbia, Iceland, Madagascar, China, the United States and soon space.

My travel team and I also agree on the importance of souvenirs, photographs and film when touring. These items are integral to the experience because they resonate long after the experience. Fabulous mnemonic devices that trigger thoughts of a place and the moments spent there. These objects are central to the magic and value of tourism and with time they rival the lived experience. Perhaps rival isn’t the correct word, maybe shape and overtake. Memories are wonderfully malleable: as vague or specific as one renders them. I would argue (the other guides don’t back me on this) that this, the after effect, is one of the greatest pleasures and strengths of tourism. To a certain extent freedom from the actuality of the place. I am no longer there in that space so I can remember it how I wish. Photographs are a little different. Photography has a specificity that at times hinders this process by providing too much information. On these occasions I suggest a polaroid or destruction of existing photographs. Or consciously altering the memory evoked by the photograph. I did have sex with that person in the background. The cavern was spacious and considerably brighter than the image makes it appear.

Alaska is the last vestige of American Wilderness.

Returning to this statement makes me want to be there. I only need three of the words: Alaska, last and wilderness. I know Alaska. I have experienced it through books, magazines, movies, television and the internet. I know it is a few thousand miles away. I know it has dramatic seasonal lighting. I know that population density is relatively sparse. I know it is more exotic than the rest of the United States. The word last is only important in its description of the wilderness. The word has an urgency, a screaming “save me,” an indication of a remnant or remains of something greater. Wilderness reminds me of another reason I am an advocate of travel. It is the spirit of exploration, the search for the new and the fear of the unknown. The word wilderness is used in stories about peril and adventure, it is unabashedly masculine and macho. I readily admit that tourism for me is indelible to fantasy.
Apology as an object of neutral buoyancy.

“I regret. I defend. I’m sorry.”
The actor playing me in my made for t.v. movie (quite likely an after-school special about low self-esteem or school shootings) utters this very quietly and nervously, a strained whisper. And it is by no means a joke; those three breathy statements outline the tenuous thread between contribution and justification. At times that thread is invisible and the sentiment is both. The act emotionally hovers somewhere between a sad regretful gesture and an assertive defense.

I am often accused of being overly apologetic. A psychologist might characterize this as a defense mechanism to be used in case of an obsession with inadequate performance or excessive guilt. I would agree. I would feel horrible about it but I would agree. I would feel like I should immediately apologize to everyone that I ever apologized to for not apologizing to them for them but for me. I would be sorry again. Chronically sorry, I would understand that this interpretation is unproductive and self-deprecating. Limited in its etymological appreciation it would appear to only function as a punctured raft, sinking shortly after signaling hope. And so I would remember that today when I said to someone, “I apologize, I am panicky and irritable. Sorry for being such a fuckhead.” it was out of recognition and care for the recipient. I would be right. I would still feel sad. The damaged boat continues to sink.

I apologize. The previous passage is tender in its emotional self-assessment style of apology but does the writing actually facilitate a greater understanding of the work? The title of this section, Apology as an object of neutral buoyancy, it seems would give reasonable information of the artist’s intention to anyone possessing a dictionary and interpretive skills. I will concede that I have attributed differing emotional values to each definition of apology (a considerably subjective process). And for the sake of linearity and to establish potential neutrality I have polarized each as either harboring positive or negative feelings. Ideally, apologies are not that simple but rather have a greater complexity and therefore occupy an intermediary position. A bright orange type II floatation device emerges from the sinking raft and surfaces.

The word apology has two somewhat contradictory meanings. The more neglected of the two meanings is a formal defense of someone or something- as in Plato’s defense of Socrates or Socrates defense of himself.

The frequently used definition is an expression of regret, as in I am sorry I am taking so much of your time.

The camera slowly pulls back and out of focus until the screen is filled with blue.

All holes filled.

I have an inability to visualize anything with specificity with the exception of words. If I close my eyes and think of my son, I cannot “picture” him. Instead I visualize something that “feels” like him but not necessarily in a tactile manner. I gather parts but not the whole and the parts are still without definition.

I am seeing something but that seeing is limited to prior knowledge lined with emotion. As prior knowledge relates to memory, mine is foggy, jumbled and sporadic. So if I happen to remember a detail of an object or experience, the mental image of it still lacks clarity. Instead, I must resort to the accompanying “feeling” which acts as a surrogate for the missing image. Visualization becomes a game of piecing together feelings to gain some semblance of the desired object.

It is worthwhile to mention this because it is related to the way in which I navigate and arrive at form. As previously illustrated there are gaps in my recall and ordering of entities. I often use phrases such as visual circumlocution and nonspecific analogy to describe this methodology of arriving at an ambiguous point between objects; for example: the feeling of a shared space that exists between an ice shanty, restaurant booth and train car, or an object that feels like both flesh and soap.
Dear Viewer,

Thank you for taking time to view the 29 YR APOLOGY. I really appreciate your interest in the work. I just wanted to apologize for a few of my shortcomings. It is my fault that the work is over-coded and filled with obscure references. Building a project is a jumbled process. I start thinking about one idea and then that idea takes a thousand different paths and often branches into other ideas. I will try to be more direct and succinct in the future. I am sorry that I let a mundane and personal idea like an apology be the focus of the work. I have a problem with that. It is not that I don’t think about more grandiose and extraordinary things. I just often get stuck on the small things. As I was working on the 29 YR APOLOGY I would dwell on small components like window placement, cord color, and seat size and in turn I lost valuable time that might have been better spent more elaborately decorating the pavilion. Or the deer statuary which I feel really horrible about. It could have been rendered much more adeptly. Also, I had every intention of presenting the viewer with a chamber (within the pavilion) that produced a cumulus cloud. For a number of reasons I was unable to achieve the creation of the microclimate in the manner that I desired.

Be well,
Ethan Kruszka

Mom,

I apologize for not being nearer. I feel bad about being so far away, especially when no one is around. If I were there I could at least play cribbage with you. I would even think about playing scrabble (even though it’s dumb and takes forever to play). I am sorry that I don’t talk with you as much as I used to. I am afraid I am not very good at talking anymore. It bothers me… talking about certain things. I apologize for not doing more. I’m sorry that you feel so miserable. I don’t know why Morrie had you try the protocol again. After you had a negative reaction after the first session it seems like he would have figured it out. Well, hopefully on the 18th you will find something out and we can start taking care of this thing. Again, I am sorry that I can’t be there. I’ll be back soon. I don’t really have much else to say. I am sorry I always say that.

Love,
Ethan

Nick,

I think you are an amazing person. I value our relationship immensely and that is why I am writing to you. I wanted to apologize for any and all of my indiscretions: art or otherwise. I’m sorry for being selfish and frequently irritable. I am sorry about panicking and not doing wonderful things for you. I’m sorry for getting worked up about things and making you worry. If I continue to act this way please stab me.

Love,
Ethan
Jordo,

I'm sorry that fourteen and fifteen year old girls can be such cruel bitches. I'm sorry I can't destroy them for you. Instead, I will try to provide you with devious plans for revenge as they become available to me. I miss you and regret being gone. I apologize for disappearing. Thanks for helping me out.

Love,
Ethan

Roy,

I hope that you are doing well. I am not entirely a good friend. I think that you are talented but generally lacking ambition. God, I am sorry for saying that. I was trying to apologize for disconnecting and just end up being an asshole instead. I am sorry that I don’t try to call and rarely see you. Seems strange but I think I sort of lost interest in hearing about sex with strippers at three in the morning. I had hoped to call and talk during the day. I hope that you have found a place to live and I am sorry about your Dad. Both of them.

xoxo,
Ethan

Dennis,

I am writing to apologize for abandoning you in Monona or whatever that place is called. I hope that you and Michael are doing well. I am also hoping that construction work has picked up. Oh, I talked to Lucas last summer. He looks very good and seems healthy. I had hoped that he would have a number for you. I miss you.

Best,
Ethan

Court,

I am sorry that you didn’t get that job. I wish I had more answers or suggestions. I am glad that I have you. I apologize for not helping you more.

Love,
Ethan
Dear Erika,

Hey. I just wanted to let you know that I am sorry for not saying bye to Rob earlier tonite. I was in such a hurry to leave that I got caught up just getting my things together. So anyway, I am sorry. I wanted to tell you that I thought that Rob was a really nice fellow. I am sorry I should have also told you that I took a couple of your CDs. Please don’t forget us.

Love,
Ethan

Dear MT-SC Students,

Thanks for listening to me talk about art. I am sorry that I didn’t do a better job. I had really hoped to bring you something spectacular in way of a giant blue tear that cried. I almost did, really. Anyway, it got lost in the mail. I apologize for that but I guess things like this happen.

Best,
Ethan Kruszka

Dear Sarah Willis,

Hi. I am sorry that I didn’t wait around for a picture. I was tired and it was cold.

Be well,
Ethan Kruszka

Jamie and Caralee,

I am sorry I feel like I kind of led you on about the whole POKE thing. It will happen just maybe not as soon as I had hoped. Anyway, I am sorry for bothering you before the show. It was great to meet both of you. XiuXiu for life.

Be well,
Ethan Alan
Amendment to the 29Yr Apology

The following dialogue was taken from video footage of the 2004 Thornton Biennial.

Visitor: Hi.
Ethan Kruszka: How are you?
V: Good. (pause) Now, I read about this in the paper.
EK: Yes, welcome to the Thornton Biennial.
V: That poor little deer.
EK: Yeah, it’s not doing so well. (pause) Can I tell you about it?
V: Sure.
EK: The title is the twenty-nine year apology and the outside is meant to be viewed as a sculpture and a building. And there is an interior space (the two walk to the door, and open it)...
V: Oh, it’s enclosed.
EK: ...where people can apologize to each other. You can actually step inside, then there’s a bench to sit down. I’m sorry. I have to apologize to everyone. Actually...um, there’s more. I live in Florida and I shipped the other part from Florida and it has not yet arrived.
V: You’re kidding.
EK: No, I shipped it Monday and it was supposed to be here in two days.
V: So it looks like the picture in the paper. (Reference to an image of the Souvenir multiple that appeared in the Globe Gazette press release for the event.)
EK: No. Actually it was supposed to have a large blue fiberglass tear that extends from the window.
V: Oh.
EK: It’s actually connected and then goes downward. So when you would look through the window you wouldn’t see this other stuff. You would be looking into the tear drop. And since it was a thin shell of fiberglass, the ambient light would shine through it making the interior space illuminated. And then inside the tear shape at the bottom, the round bulbous part, there is a vaporizer machine that mists on the window.
V: Like tears building up.
EK: Yeah, and when people sit inside and apologize to one another - it’s always there. It was always supposed to be like a blue landscape, a bad metaphor for sadness. (they both exit the structure)
V: It’s open to interpretation.
EK: Yeah.
V: Well, I am sorry.
EK: It’s okay. No.
V: You’re saying you’re sorry.
EK: I know because I have a life preserver as a substitute for...
V: (laughs)
EK: I know I’m sorry. It’s keeping my head above water.
THE 2004 THORNTON BIENNIAL:
THE KRUSZKA PAVILION:
THE 29YR APOLOGY.

PHOTO CREDITS.
All photos courtesy of the artist unless otherwise specified.

1. The 2004 watertower renewal project, Thornton, Iowa.
   Courtesy of Travis Fischer
2. KIMT News 3 covering The Thornton Biennial.
   Courtesy of KIMT News 3
   Courtesy of Adaire Willis.
5. Detail of deer from The Kruszka Pavilion: 29 YR Apology.
8. Detail two of deer from The Kruszka Pavilion: 29 YR Apology.
9. Thornton Mayor Richard Dorenkamp inside The
   Kruszka Pavilion: 29 YR Apology.
10. Ashton Willis inside The Kruszka Pavilion: 29 YR Apology.
11. Visitors to The Kruszka Pavilion at Dusk.
    Courtesy of Jordan Delaney.
12. Interior of The Kruszka Pavilion: 29 YR Apology at night.
    Courtesy of Adaire Willis.
13. Outside the opening night festivities of
    The 2004 Thornton Biennial.
    Courtesy of Adaire Willis.
14. Detail of deer head from The Kruszka Pavilion at night.
15. Opening reception of the Thornton Biennial at the Thornton
    Community Center.
16. Meservey Thornton Elementary School grades K-3 visiting the
    The Kruszka Pavilion: 29 YR Apology.
    Coutesy of Adaire Willis.
17. Meservey Thornton Elementary School grades K-3 visiting the
    The Kruszka Pavilion: 29 YR Apology.
    Courtesy of Adaire Willis.

For additional information on
The Thornton Biennial including further documentation,
official press release, and 2006 Thornton Biennial sub-
mission procedures visit online at thefluffconstruct.com
or contact via email at thefluffconstruct@yahoo.com.