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## Roadtripping with artist Wayne Zebzda

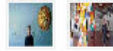
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By Pam Woolway - The Garden Island | Posted: Friday, September 25, 2009 12:00 am | (0) Comments



Artist Wayne Zebzda 'feels the beat' by listening to the recording of the beat of tires over speed bumps. In the background, speed bumps spell 'feelings' in braille at the Roadtrip exhibit at Kukui'ula Village. Photos by Dennis Fujimoto/The Garden Island



Twisted guardrails, a 17 foot tower of stacked road signs, a disco ball made from reflective road bumps — you've seen it all before, just not quite like this.

Roadtrip, an exhibition by local artist Wayne Zebzda opened in the space adjacent to Galerie 103 at Kukui'ula Village this month. From 6 to 8 p.m. Saturday let the artist guide you through his monument to traffic. Or if you'd rather phone in, that's an option. Zebzda's voice recorded tour of the show can be heard by dialing 408-794-7745.

"I've always liked signs and symbols. Universal images cut across cultures the same way music builds a bridge," he said.

Described by the artist as found art, Zebzda is something of a planetary janitor clearing the roads of wreckage that would have found the landfill.

Reckless drivers and graffiti artists become his accomplice.

"The signs slowly evolved over time," he said. "It started with graffiti signs on old cane roads to Polihale. Originally I was just documenting them," he said.

First he'd photograph these island artifacts, then enlarge them and then turn them back into signs. The turning point came four years ago when the Department of Transportation started letting him rummage through their scrap metal. Zebzda's studio is filled with wounded road signs and spiraled guardrails.

"The twisted guardrails are so surreal to me," he said.

In many cases he catches roadworkers cleaning up after an accident and just hauls off their rubbish. In the case of his reflective disco ball, "Feel the Beat," little piles of road bumps along the Poi'ipu Tree Tunnel were there for the taking.

Curiosity is the force driving Zebzda's creativity.

"I'll have an idea and just need to know how to execute it," he said. "Found objects kind of find me."

Roadtrip was exhibited at The Contemporary Museum in Honolulu in 2008 and just returned from The Maui Arts and Cultural Center. What fits in the space at Kukui'ula Village is only half the original.

Zebzda said the show keeps growing and changing. Take for instance the unfinished retail space that Roadtrip inhabits. The unpaved corner for the commode inspired Zebzda to dig a three-by-three foot hole for a desk and chair. The piece is titled "I Dig My New Office."

"This could represent our sad economic climate," he said of the piece.

That's the thing with Zebzda, any one of his pieces "could" have multiple meanings. Given some thought the viewer won't know whether to laugh or cry.

"I like to question the viewer as your viewing or have the viewer question themselves," he said. "That's why I like to keep things open ended."

Road signs are a shared language, but taken out of context they invite a deeper conversation. The titles alone create dialogue: The 17-feet of stacked signage for instance, titled, "It might be a long journey ahead and quite possibly dangerous but I can't really tell you all the details just yet" or the more succinct, "Memory Loss," a series of faded Department of Transportation signs.

"If I weren't an artist I'd be a sociologist," he said. "I'm studying our culture through our symbols. Road signs are the rules of the road. Rules are how we navigate through life."

To take the audiotour and view pieces on the Web, go to [galerie103.com/roadtrip.htm](http://galerie103.com/roadtrip.htm) and dial 408-794-7745. Or meet Zebzda at on of the following art talks: 6 to 8 p.m. Saturday, Oct. 3 or Oct. 24. The show closes Nov. 8. Gallery hours are 11 a.m. to 9 p.m. Monday through Saturday; Sundays by appointment only.

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