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**Exhibition proposal for *Burn Pile / unusual Madison fire* at Currents New Media**

The Burn Pile project began as a roving interactive art installation, functioning both as a truth/sincerity harvesting unit, and as a display and broadcast venue, aspiring to link people in a community of heart-felt incoherence. It has since evolved into its current form as an accumulating and variable flow.

Truth donors were invited to speak inside a private booth. Their statements were immediately scrambled with prior utterances from previous donors (by means of a purpose made code), thereby losing any obvious or accurate meaning. Donors then chose whether or not to release these garbled statements to be variously commemorated by me. The interactive booth was deployed at public locations around the Central Valley of California (and for a stint in Tennessee), such as shopping malls, thrift stores, flea markets, and parks. By carefully making objects to commemorate these garbled aggregations of peoples' innermost expressions, I aspire to show respect for an ambient sincerity freed of specificity.

Technology enabled this blending clash of truths. Does a greater truth—obscure, indefinable—arise from this? Does my own personal labor in embellishing these scrambled utterances by itself enhance them with meaning? I feel these questions have particular relevance in our current climate of truth prodding.

The Burn Pile installation is composed primarily of very lightweight paper lumber, paper structural elements and furniture, and paper maché dish ware, frames, signage and random paper utilities, with an interior lightweight supporting scaffold of concealed actual lumber. The facsimile lumber and broken furniture are paper pieces — gator board mounted with relief prints on paper — of the varied flow patterns over which I have inscribed the garbled truth essences.

A significant element of the pile are numerous embedded LED signs of varying sizes, running the donated statements in a simulation of flickering embers. I use a variety of scrolling LED signs, all programmed with the scrambled statements (a lot of them). These signs are of varying vintage, generally purchased second-hand. The overall impression is not high-tech, but is perhaps best described as confusing/soothing.

An ongoing and unifying element throughout the project is the use of patterning suggestive of woodgrain, which I consider a stand-in for a notion of “flow”. I think of people donating their truth or sincerity into a communal gibberish as a process of releasing their words into a flow of change, or even as tossing their statements onto the flames of a pyre. I liked how my writing these garbled statements over the patterned surfaces rendered them even more obscure, until they really dissolved into a flow. The woodgrain had the added benefit of being useable to suggest the structure of buildings, and their collapse became a parallel for the collapse of meaning in the statements. In time, in changing times, this has come to seem like a reflection of current trends in our culture. Clashing truths.

The project is very flexible and can be adapted to fit different spaces, in different ways. Preferably, the project would be installed leaning up against one, two, or three walls to a height of approximately 8 feet, and spreading onto the floor about 10 feet out from the wall(s). Its length can vary, from a minimum of 15 or 20 feet to as much as 60 feet. I would especially appreciate opportunities to showcase

the installation at night, with the LED signs running, providing a heightened impression of flickering embers.

The transportation and installation of the project would be done by two people, myself and my partner Mahalia LoMele. We would need provided for this installation, apart from the space: 4 power outlets, a ladder, and some basic tools, such as hammer and drill. The LED signs are controlled by a set of independent off/on buttons, to be operated by the show personnel.