

Story

In 1992 I met Ed Kienholz for the first time at the studio of Peter Shelton where I was working as an assistant. Peter was busy, so Kienholz suggested that we pitch pennies while he waited. I didn't have any pennies, so he loaned me some. As we played, Kienholz won most of the rounds, winning back his own pennies, putting me deeper in debt. By the time Peter returned, I owed Kienholz 5¢. I offered him a nickel, but he demanded to be paid in pennies. Optimistically, I told him I would pay him the next time we met, and he agreed. At the time, Kienholz was the most inspirational artist for me — my narrative and found object installations had born an aesthetic debt to Ed and Nancy Reddin-Kienholz since 1988. I left my emulation unspoken at the time; Ed left no space for it either.

On Feb. 01, 1994, after I had been living in Japan for a year and a half, I met Kienholz for the second time at the opening of *Of the Human Condition* at Spiral Hall in Tokyo which included *The Merry-Go-World Or Begat By Chance And The Wonder Horse Trigger*. He and Reddin-Kienholz were present to speak. I reintroduced myself with this story and offered Kienholz a 5 yen coin. He immediately recognized it as a symbol of good luck. He also immediately recognized that the exchange rate now left him in debt to me.¹ Optimistically, again, I told him he could pay me the next time we met. I hoped this relationship, exchange, and debt would deepen over time. The following day I flew back to the States to move to New York City.

Kienholz died on June 10, 1994. By prior arrangement, on June 14, Reddin-Kienholz buried him in his 1940 Ford Packard. The car was ornamented with the ashes of his dog Smash in the back seat, a dollar bill in Kienholz's pocket, a bottle of 1931 Italian red wine, a deck of cards, and his favorite big band music playing in the car radio, among other things. Friends stood by throwing flowers, dirt, playing cards, and money into the grave.

Tableau

This tableau will take the form of a central stage installation composed of found and constructed objects surrounded by a stadium-like structure. This structure will be constructed out of warped or used 2' x 4's completely surrounding a plywood base holding the "body" of the sculpture. The 2' x 4's will be covered with a wire-screen mesh. The screen will allow pennies and foreign coin currency to accumulate in the central sculpture area when they are thrown by viewers. The found objects located on the inside will bear direct and indirect references to Kienholz and Reddin-Kienholz and their work and to me and my work. These references will be made explicit or obscure by way of poetic and/or analytical texts.

The project will only be complete after a final event. I will read the accompanying text as the tableau rests in a large hole in the ground. An audience will be invited to watch and throw money, and, etc. in from above. The object will then be buried underground so that it is completely out of sight. Ideally this completion will occur in a location with a different currency (aesthetic, cultural, monetary) that will complicate the theme of debt but also bear some connection to Kienholz: an example would be near the Kienholz studio in Berlin. The purchasing collector or institution agrees to these terms as part of the sale, and also agrees to take the necessary legal and physical steps required to insure that the piece is never unearthed and never exhibited again. A book documenting the project and "drawings" will be the only means to remember the piece.

PRICE:
PART ONE: \$ (to be negotiated)
(concept tableau):

PART TWO: \$ (to be negotiated)
(reliquary box)

PART THREE: Costs (land, equipment rental, materials, labor, and, etc.) plus artist's wages.

¹ The closing rate on Feb. 01, 1994 = 108.20 yen to \$1.00 therefore Ed Kienholz owed me .41 of a cent, approx. 2/5¢.