SAMSARA UNLIMITED: TOWARDS AN ECOLOGY OF COMPASSION

A Thesis Submitted to the College of

Graduate Studies and Research

in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements

for the Master of Fine Arts

in the Department of Art and Art History
University of Saskatchewan

Saskatoon

By

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ABSTRACT

This paper describes the philosophical and functional framework of the MFA thesis exhibition *Samsara Unlimited: towards an ecology of compassion*. *Samsara Unlimited* was designed as a conceptual social artwork that would engage a network of art students and interested participants in developing a collaborative network. Using established high art aesthetics and familiar consumer based signifiers; the gallery was transformed over a week into a production, design and retail facility. In this torqued capitalist micro-system, financial profit was considered critical for the functioning of the system but secondary to the generation of a field of compassion.

The project sought to create a process through which the general public could become familiar with the perceptive processes engaged by artists in reconstructing everyday reality. It was posited that the ability to engage these perceptive processes would potentially lead to an ontological shift in the spectator. Participants who entered the gallery space could alter between the functional reality of a concept store and the altered reality of an art gallery. The public was encouraged to visit over the week of the installation to ask questions, get involved in art making process or simply socialize with the artists and artisans involved in the project.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

In an artistic exploration that involves generating a creative community, there are many co-creators that should be recognized. I would like to note the following individuals without whom this project would not have been possible: Al Hack, Alexa Hainsworth, and James Popoff; Julie, George and Phaedra Hutchings; Monique Roy, Todd Burton, Joshua Forrest, Maxine Proctor, Chris Cortez, Allysha Larsen, Gloria Ingabire, Lacey Eninew, Lindsay, Maja Montgomery, Martine Ingabire, and Sofya; Tenzin and Jane; Lee Mason, Jean-Sebastien Gauthier, Chris Allen, Patrick Bulas, and Lynne Erickson; Lee, Chaco and Eric; Jesse Thornton and Cheryl Cooke; Graham Therens, Candice Groesnick, Gary Young and Sylvia Cholodnuik.

I would like to thank my assistant Jenalene Antony, whose passion and creativity are instilled into the heart of the artwork; my supervisor, Tim Nowlin, for encouraging me to pursue my intellectual and artistic instincts and for providing insight and support throughout the development of the exhibition thesis; the other members of my advisory committee members, Joan Borsa and Jennifer Crane, who gave deeply of their time and expertise; professors Milutin Gubash and Peter Purdue for providing an intellectual space through which I was able to explore the historical and theoretical foundations of collective artistic actions. I am indebted to Charles Ringness, for standing by me in the storm, clearing the path when needed and demonstrating exemplary professionalism both as professor and as a confidante; the College of Graduate Studies for providing substantial scholarship funds and enabling the development and execution of the project.

Gratitude is extended to my friends and mentors, Sandra Semchuk and Ashok Mathur, who have demonstrated unwavering confidence in me; to Adrian Stimson for his generous spirit as a collaborator in our professional art practice and as a fellow traveller in the great journey; to Rick Pilling, my fellow MFA student and painter extraordinaire, for his kindness and respect for diversity in vision and art.

My greatest appreciation is extended to my life partner and fellow artist, Nissa, whose gracious heart and artistic vision inspired me to intensify my effort to find a real world application for my intellectual and artistic musings. I am fortunate that she chose me to be her collaborator in both art and life.

This work is dedicated to my son, Kiran.

May you realize Nirvana within Samsara.

Samsara Unlimited: towards an ecology of compassion

THESIS EXHIBITION PAPER

Artist Statement

Background

Exhibition Description

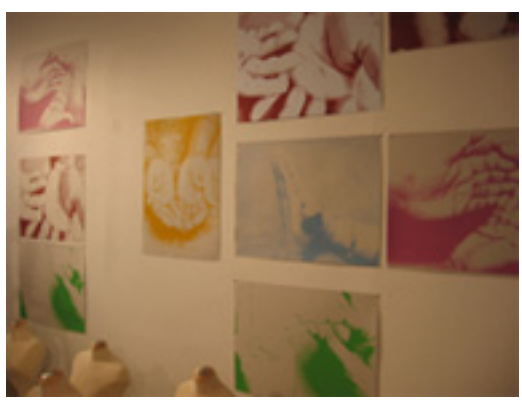
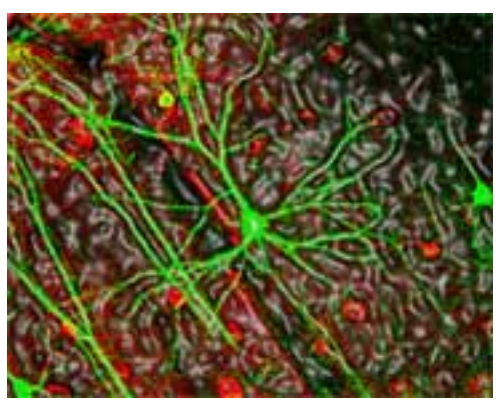
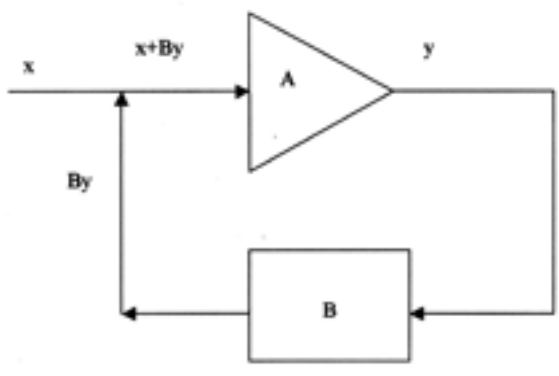
Summary

The Exhibition Thesis Paper consists of The Artist Statement, Background, Exhibition Description, and Summary as well as the Interactive Appendices below.

INTERACTIVE APPENDICES

The following appendices provide documentation of the exhibition and enable the reader to experience the content as it was available to the public through the exhibition media kit and web site during the project. The content as well as the ability to navigate it according to ones own interests were an integral part of the functioning art system. The media kit was directed to inquiries from the media, academia, and the insitutional art world, while the web site was accessible to a global audience as well as to visitors within the gallery space. The content and communications design of both the media kit and the website were developed as part of the 'marketing orientation' of artistic concept behind the exhibition. The supporting essays were an exception since they were available only through the website and were written for an academic and art educated audience. The essays were integrated into the artwork as part of artistic investigation into art and academia and process of commercialization.

Both the website and the media kit were intended to complement the cognitive disorientation process active within the gallery installation and designed to interrupt the reality continuity of spectators who were operating from a traditional art world perspective; a perspective based on the making of art objects and a retinal reliance of those objects for evaluation.

	link to supporting essays	*These essays were added as further reading to provide insight into the theoretical background that initiated the art work. To maintain the conceptual rigour of the art system, the essays were included on the Samsara website and attributed to a semi-fictious persona. As such the essays should be considered as part of the artwork.*
QUESTIONS?	link to frequently asked questions (FAQ's)	*This point of entry was directed to a general public to explain, in a consumer oriented language, the theoretical concepts and principles that were operating in the exhibition.*
	link to social engagement/ network building activities	*This linked to the main menu of the website and is a record of the various activities in which participant engaged as part of the samsara system. Designed to emulate and function as a commerical website, the frontpage provided an entry point to the artwork for those individuals who would be comfortable with a commerical design.*
	link to resulting social network	*These were some of the many people who, through their active participation, developed the relationships that composed the artwork.*
	link to art products	*The product listing provided descriptions and images of the products developed.*
	link to the vision and values that generated and formulated the art system	*The Corporate Vision gave an understanding of the goals, values and operational principles of Samsara Unlimited*
	link to design principles of system and resulting products/networks	*The design information section provided a detailed explanation of the art products examined and the principles that governed their creation.*
	link to project feedback	*The feedback section provided an opportunity to those affected by the system to provide feedback. It also provided insight into how different people responded to the effects of the exhibition.*

Artist Statement

Samsara Unlimited: awards as co-design & composition are an artistic investigation into the merger of artistic, pedagogical and collaborative practices. While following art theories of the avant-garde, Dada, Fluxus, Situationist International, Fluxus, and especially the Dadaist Fluxkit, Samsara Unlimited expand that sense of art, aesthetics and concentration as a pedagogical practice, into the realm of the social, the political, the economic, the ecological, the technological, and the spiritual. Samsara Unlimited awards as co-design & composition are

Theoretical Anchors and Art Historical Reference Points

Marcel Duchamp
Marcel Duchamp was an artist known for releasing art from its reliance on the visual or "retinal" and opening the territory for art practices based on concepts and the relationship of the work with the viewer. Duchamp saw the creative act belonging not to the artist but accuring in the mind of the spectator, through the spectators interpretation of the art work. (Nov 1, 2006 http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Marcel_Duchamp)

Joseph Beuys
Joseph Beuys regarded society as one great work of art. He believed that each person could contribute creatively to the creation of the social organism.
(Nov 1, 2006 http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Beuys#_note-4)

Jeff Koons
Jeff Koons is known for his high priced art that plays on kitsch and commericialism in the art world.
(Nov 1, 2006 http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Jeff_Koons)

Frankfurt School
A neo-marxist school that put forth "The Critical Theory of Society" as a response to industrialism as advanced capitalist society moved towards facism. Through this integrated theory, the Frankfurt school sought " simultenously to expain and combat dominationa and alientation and bring about a rational, humane, democratic, and socialist society."
(Nov 1, 2006 http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Frankfurt_school)

Art System
A system is a grouping of, real or abstract, objects or entities that form a whole and where each part interacts or is inter-related with every other part. An art systems is an organization of ideas, products, and people that are inter-related and inter-active. If an art system becomes self maintaining or self generating then it takes on qualities of a cybernetic system and could also a be considered living artwork defined primarily by its relationships processes, and indeterminate boundary conditions.

Connective Aesthetics
A term first used by Suzi Gablik that refers to the move towards art-making that integrates itself as a socially responsive form. Connective aesthetics is used to describe art that focuses interdependence, interconnectedness, and community. Connective aesthetics, informs art-making that move away from art making as an individual endeavour and towards an undestanding that the "relational self is embedded in larger systems and tends towards integration."
Gablik, Suzi, "Connective Aesthetics", American Art, Vol6, No.2 (Spring, 1992), pp 2-7

Temporary Autonomous Zones
The Temporary Autonomous Zone (TAZ) describes the socio-political tactic of creating temporary space that eludes formal structures of control. The essay uses various historical and philosophical examples, all of which attempt to lead the reader to the conclusion that the best way to create a non-hierarchical system of social relationships is to concentrate on the present and on releasing one's own mind from the controlling mechanisms that have been imposed on it.

In the formation of a TAZ, Bey argues that information becomes a key tool that sneaks into the cracks of formal procedures. A new territory of the moment is created that is on the boundary line of established regions. Any attempt at permanence, that goes beyond the moment, deteriorates to a structured system that inevitably stifles individual creativity. It is this chance at creativity that is real empowerment.

(from Nov 1, 2006 http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/ Temporary_Autonomous_Zone)

Reality Hacking
Reality hacking is an artistic practice that emerges from the intersection of hacking and hacker culture, contemporary art, activism, and net culture. Reality hacking takes as its basis a broad, phenomenological point of view of the world, and considers (often unorthodox) investigations into everyday objects and situations a meaningful way of probing into the working of varied social contexts.
(from Nov 1, 2006 http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Reality_hacking)

Samsara
Sa?s?ra, the Sanskrit and P?li term for "continuous movement" or "continuous flowing" refers in Buddhism to the concept of a cycle of birth (j?ti) and consequent decay and death (jar?mara?a), in which all beings in the universe participate and which can only be escaped through enlightenment. Sa?s?ra is associated with suffering and is generally considered the antithesis of nirv??a or nibb?na.
(from Nov 1, 2006 http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Samsara_%28Buddhism%29)

Hacking
In computer programming, a hacker is a software designer and programmer who builds elegant, beautiful programs and systems. A hacker can also be a programmer who hacks or reaches a goal by employing a series of modifications to exploit or extend existing code or resources.
(from Nov 1, 2006 http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Hacker)

Complex Systems Theory
Complex Systems theory referes to a research approach that moves outside of a reductionist approach to understanding phenomena. A complex system in nature exhibits the following charateristics: relationships are non-linear; relationships contain feedback loops; complex systems are open; complex systems have a memory; complex systems may be nested; boundaries are difficult to determine; dynamic network of multiplicity
(from Nov 1, 2006 http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Complex_system)

Zen
Zen is a form of Mahayana Buddhism that places great importance on moment-by-moment awareness and 'seeing deeply into the nature of things' by direct experience.
(from Nov 1, 2006 http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Zen)

Cybernetic System
"Cybernetics is the study of communication and control, typically involving regulatory feedback in living organisms, machines and organisations, as well as their combinations. "
(Nov 1, 2006 http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Cybernetic)

Cognitive Dissonance
Cognitive dissonance is the perception of incompatibility between two cognitions, which can be defined as any element of knowledge, including attitude, emotion, belief, or behavior; in laymen's terms, it is the uncomfortable tension that comes from holding two conflicting thoughts at the same time. The theory of cognitive dissonance states that contradicting cognitions serve as a driving force that compels the mind to acquire or invent new thoughts or beliefs, or to modify existing beliefs, so as to reduce the amount of dissonance (conflict) between cognitions. Experiments have attempted to quantify this hypothetical drive.
(from Nov 1, 2006 http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Cognitive_dissonance)

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ESSAYS BY AL HACK

Chapter 3

"We refer to cybernetics because there are no other proper words available."

Jonathan Cott

Book of Wonderworks

(Physical excerpts from the profiles of Maitreya and Civilization As Parasite)

The Transformed Man in the Coming Society

The ability, first, of individuals, of society, to be a confident and balanced whole within the planetary society. The high functioning ability of the participants (after the normalization brought about by the collection of a much heavily-weighted-in-the-direction-of-the-Light-Ray-of-Love-Wisdom-Light-Ray-of-Love-Wisdom-Light-Ray-of-Love-Wisdom

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To contact the Consciousness Research Laboratory at Cognitive Technologies please send an email to: info@sensara.com or call 1-800-CRL-0000 (+1-800-275-0000 outside the USA) or write to: Cognitive Technologies, Consciousness Research Laboratory, 1000 Cedar Street, Santa Cruz, CA 95060 USA
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Last Updated: 10/29/2007
URL: http://www.sensara.com/consciousness/glossary/glossary.htm

Artistic Operations in the Formation of Contemporary Consciousness

The publication of references to contemporary artistic operations in the formation of the political and monocultural ruling-class consciousness of the 20th century, and the subsequent rise of a counter-culture, is a major feature of the 21st century anti-terrorism war-zone mapping. We follow Gregory Bateson, who pointed out the artificial difficulty of the "two cultures" (the arts and the sciences) and the necessity of a unified culture, as the intellectual efficiency of the "two cultures" is not equal. Bateson's work, Mind and Nature, A Necessary Unity, is a major contribution to the unification of the Consciousness Research Laboratory, the study of consciousness. The goal of Bateson's book is to promote the "ecology of ideas" and to show how the "pattern that connects" is the "central quality of all living systems." Bateson's work is a major change agent and is directly used for research into the brain. The course of the present research is mind-altering and consciousness-altering. Bateson's work is a major change agent. The study of consciousness is a study of the mind-altering and consciousness-altering process. The study of consciousness is a study of the mind-altering and consciousness-altering process. The study of consciousness is a study of the mind-altering and consciousness-altering process

AL HACK'S FAVORITE WRITERS AND POETS

al hack's good picks

Writers and Poets:

Aldous Huxley (philosophy/fiction)
Bruce Mau (design)
Chuang Tze (philosophy)
Clare Graves (psychology)
Hakim Bey (political philosphy)
Herman Hesse (fiction)
John Walker (sociology)
Kabir (Poetry)
Kahil Gibran (Poetry)
Krishnamurty (philosophy)
Ken Wilber (philosophy)
Kurt Vonnegut Jr (fiction)
Lao Tze (philosophy)
Mahatma Gandhi (political philosophy)
Marcel DuChamp (art)
Martin Buber (philosophy)
Michel Foucault (sociology)
Pierre Teilhard de Chardin (philosophy)
Robert Smithson (art)
Rumi (poetry)
Socrates (philosophy)
Sri Auribindo (philosophy)
Sun tse (Activism)
Walt Whitman (poetry)
William Blake (poetry)

Teachers:

Baba Hari Dass
Bahá'u'lláh
Gautama Buddha
Guru Nanak
Jesus of Nazareth
Krishna
Lao Tzu
Rumi
Socrates

FAQ's

Is Samsara Unlimited a business?

We function as a business but we differ in our profit motive. Most businesses put financial gain, maximizing shareholder value or return on investment as their main objective. Our main objective is to generate compassion through creativity. We do understand that we need financial capital to sustain our organization and are very serious about how we manage the financial aspect of our business. However we feel financial capital flows from developing our investments in compassion and community and is a result of well-engaged creativity.

Is Samsara Unlimited an Art Work?

We function as a living organizational and systems-based art work and while people may not associate us with traditional art forms such as painting, sculpture, drawing or printmaking we do attempt to incorporate those forms and the principles behind them into our production. We follow a conversation in western art history that includes Marcel DuChamp, Joesph Beuys, Jeff Koons, N.E. Thing Company and Suzi Gablick. If you really want to go into this, then you can read Al Hack's essay on the subject from our website.

http://www.samsaraunlimited.com/essays/alhack/artistoperations.html

What is an art system and how does this differ from an idea system?

A system is a grouping of, real or abstract, objects or entities that form a whole and where each part interacts or is inter-related with every other part. When we state that Samsara Unlimited is an Art System, what we mean is that we are an organization of ideas, products, and people that are inter-related and inter-active as artworks in ourselves. The art system then, is also a living artwork. An art system can also be an idea system and the terms for us are interchangeable. Although an idea may seem to be beyond art, we feel that the dimensions that define art operate within any system, be it social, organisational, or environmental.

If you want to know more about systems theory, art and society are related check out Al Hack's essay on the subject at the following link:

http://www.samsaraunlimited.com/essays/alhack/functionsociety.html

What is the difference between your art products and ordinary consumer products?

Our products work to subvert themselves as products. Other than this, there is no difference between our products and those produced by other design and consumer product development companies.

Some artists might say that Samsara Unlimited is not an artwork and some professional designers and business people might say that you are not a really involved in product development. What would be your reply?

They should talk to each other about it. We think the dialogue would be a good thing. Many artists seem to appreciate neither designers nor business people. Likewise many designers and business people seem not to appreciate artists. We think that being able to displace oneself from the myths of one's discipline can only be a good thing.

Why do you give your financial profits away to individuals and small groups that are unregistered charities?

There are several reasons. First, if financial profit were our objective then we would not be focused on our real objective - to generate a field of compassion. So we give the surplus financial gains away to individuals and small groups who are non-registered charities.

We choose small non-registered charities because they have demonstrated commitment to expanding the field of compassion but are too busy and too focused on their work to fund raise the small amounts that they need to do big things in small communities. We do not need a tax receipt because this would give us a benefit that we are not seeking. That allows us to invest in these small projects because they are aligned with our mission.

Why do you not invest your financial profits locally?

There are certainly many worthy projects in the 'developed' world and in the developed world there are many systems that are readily accessible to people with good ideas.

We choose to invest with people and projects that fall through the crack of public and private attention and funding but are still doing amazing work. So we seek individuals or groups that have very little of both and are located in geopolitical situations where there is no source of local support.

At this moment we are focusing on Tshelanyemba Community Project that in the past has developed programs for orphans with HIV/AIDS in rural Zimbabwe. In Zimbabwe there is little or no government infrastructure to provide basics like education, health care and clean water. In the case of communities where children are HIV positive and where a large proportion of the adults have died from AIDS, children services are non-existent. We are attempting to support the development of community priority projects, so that this community can become economically sustainable and thereby provide for their community members.

We can't be all things to all people. But we can help a few people very far away to help themselves.

Why would a grass roots business want to use your brand?

Samsara Unlimited provides an identifiable umbrella brand that allows grass-roots business and other creative projects to express their alignment with our goals and values. At present, the use of our brand does require our permission and is available for free.

Since Samsara Unlimited works hard on its marketing and promotion, other groups, who do not have the same expertise can benefit from our contribution to the ecology of compassion.

Would Samsara Unlimited be competition for a grass roots business?

That may happen in some product areas, services, and idea systems, but it is not our intention. We believe that the more people become prosperous in working to develop an ecology of compassion the better for all of us involved in it. It is a worldview that holds abundance, collaboration and gifting at its foundations rather that scarcity, competition, and financial transactions.

How do you generate the financial capital necessary to support Samsara Unlimited and create the financial profits for you to operate and to invest in the projects in which you are interested?

We sell stuff.

What is the relationship between Samsara Unlimited and Al Hack Concepts?

Samsara Unlimited was a brand generated by Al Hack Concepts. Al Hack came up with the idea and Mr. Pillay, the current business manager and a product designer with Sasmara Unlimited, is developing the brand as a project. Eventually Samsara Unlimited might be a separate operational entity but there will always be a creative relationship between Al Hack Concepts and Samsara Unlimited.

How does Samsara Unlimited differ from organizations using yogic, Hindu and Buddhist imagery to market their products?

SU is not simply using the images, iconography and language to make money and create a marketing concept. By focusing on compassion and certain values common to those traditions, we endeavour to ground our operations and our designs in the teachings yogic, Hindu, and Buddhist values.

What is your design vision?

Our products are unique, hand made, or editioned, based on esoteric yogic Buddhist aesthetics; and designed to work towards 100% incorporation of the principles fair trade, fair wage, and organics.

What do you mean by an integration of environmental and humanitarian values?

Environment oriented values are usually set as separate from humanitarian values. What we see as important to the future is that our actions in the present flow from an understanding that environment and human society are integrated entities. This is an ecological vision that feeds into a behavior of equanimity, balance, and integration, between human society and its resources. This vision is based upon individuals coming to understand how desire and non-attachment function to create contentment in a consumer based society.

What is an ecology of compassion?

An ecology of compassion is a term to describe the nature of the system in which Samasara Unlimited operates. The term ecology has been drawn from its common use definition to actually mean eco-system.

This eco-system of compassion is dynamic set of relationships between the various ideas, operations and entities involved in generating a field of compassion. In this sense the ecology of compassion is that which defines how Samsara Unlimited operates. Samsara Unlimited is one part of that system.

At Samsara Unlimited we understand compassion as being towards ourselves as individuals and towards other humans beings but also linked to the biologic aspect of the term ecology. As such an ecology of compassion also defines human relationships in terms of compassion in other systems actively involved in our biosphere.

What is a field of compassion?

Basically it just means that through our sphere of activity we aspire to convey compassion and those that come in touch with that sphere begin to act from a place of compassion.

More formally, the term field comes from physics and refers to and all-pervading influence of a region of space-time. A field of compassion is metaphysical phrase that refers to the aspect of compassion that is able to interact with ideas and other systems to transform them within a region of space-time.

What is personal sustainability?

Personal sustainability is about having a life where one is financially capable to sustain oneself or ones family but is also engaged creatively in the life. Of course it is open to interpretation, but we mean that it is having good food, a comfortable place to live, work that is creative and fulfilling, and allows one to integrate family, community and environmentally friendly habits into daily living.

Is your fashion actually art and not just fashion?

Like the rest of our product line, the fashion items in themselves are just regular products; however, with them we are interested more in our models and the advertising images of them. Most models don't get to speak. For us, what the model's say and their reason for being involved with our project of compassion is the important thing. Our models chose this project and are women who have a voice and are passionate about certain social and environmental issues.

What is the difference between Samsara Unlimited and Bennetton, in using models of different ethnicities?

No real difference in our images. We like to celebrate diversity and beauty. We think their images are beautiful because they do this. However, we are driven by a different definition of profit. Also, we work actively to ensure that our products are manufactured with the principles of fair trade, fair wage and organic material sourcing.

I am skeptical, is this just another scheme to get money or notoriety?

Skepticism is a good thing but it is somewhat overrated and fashionable these days. But you are giving us too much credit. We are not that smart. We just wanna' have fun. Besides, there are much easier ways to get wealthy or famous than our project.

What you are doing seems pretty idealistic, how can you state that you value pragmatism?

Admittedly we are reaching for a new way of being and thinking as a company, which is really quite idealistic; however, we are quite pragmatic in our approach. We are artists that operate in the worlds of business and design. We have to be good at doing what we do in order to live long and prosper.

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towards an ecology of compassion

A part of the Samsara Unlimited fashion line the classic t-shirt can be purchased at the Samsara Unlimited facility in the Gordon Snelgrove Gallery in the Murray Building at the University of Saskatchewan from September 11-22 during regular business hours.

All of the proceeds from the Samsara Unlimited concept store will be donated to Sylvia Cholodnuik and the Tshelanyemba community in Zimbabwe Africa. As a non-registered charity, Sylvia has been able to aid Tshelanyemba by funding a hospital, AIDS orphanage as well as two schools, effectively aiding the community in becoming self sustainable.

click for more information

Visitors to date:

Welcome to Samsara Unlimited!

Samsara Unlimited, a division of Al Hack Concepts, is a for profit design company and art system that focuses on applying design principles to art objects, consumer products and other systems. Samsara Unlimited strives to extend the flow of financial and creative capital to small groups or individuals who themselves aim to facilitate the development of locally sustainable systems centered on the integration of environmental and humanitarian values. We intend to be a catalyst in developing an ecology of compassion and consider the financial dimension of profit critical but secondary to this goal.

read more here

Activity Schedule for Samsara Unlimited (September 4 – Sept 22, 2006)

Sept 4 - September 22

Promotional Activities

Passive interventions will take place from Sept 11-22, 2006 in classrooms, bathrooms and library stalls across the University of Saskatchewan Campus.

Artwork will be displayed in the ad spaces of Captive Audience in the washrooms at Louis, Lower Place Riel and the Mendel Art Gallery. Captive Audience ad spaces on garbage cans in the Place Riel Tunnel and the Place Riel Concourse will also be used.

Lantern Making Workshop; Hosted by Alexa Hainsworth - Join Alexa in the Gordon Snelgrove art gallery on **Friday September 15** at 10 am for a workshop that will unveil itself on September 22 at the Samsara Unlimited Brand Launch.

Collage Community Bike Project – Re-purposed bicycles will re-branded with the Samsara Unlimited Logo and covered in messages by students. They can be seen alongside the **Hike and Bike Challenge** "free student bicycle repair" stations as well as at the Samsara Unlimited Brand Launch on **September 22**. How will you become a part of the Community Bike Project? click here for more information.

Samsara Unlimited Drum Circle - Bring your bongo and join the drum circle on the steps of the Gordon Snelgrove Art Gallery **Thursday September 21 at 1:30pm**. Rain or shine! Thank you to Josh Forrest.

Samsara Unlimited Tea - Join us in the Gordon Snelgrove **daily at 3pm** for Chai tea and snacks.

Friends of Samsara Unlimited will inform the student body about the project while distributing temporary tattoos of the Samsara Unlimited Brand

Drop by the Samsara Unlimited facility in the Gordon Snelgrove and we'll outfit you with your Samsara Unlimited tagging tools!

Sept 11-15 (regular business hours)

Concept Store Installation

The Samsara Unlimited Concept Store will be installed at the Gordon Snelgrove Art Gallery on the University of Saskatchewan campus. Visitors are welcome to drop by to ask questions or get involved with the installation as we transform the gallery space into a Samsara Unlimited facility.

Sept 18

Media Visits

Staff will be on hand to answer questions for the media or the public.

Sept 18-22 (regular business hours)

Concept Store Opening

Viewers are welcome to drop-in to ask questions and to preview, make reserve bids and purchase both prototypes from our design lab and samples from the concept store.

Sept 22, 2006 (7-10 pm)

Official Brand and Portal Launch

This will be the official Samsara Unlimited brand launch and final purchases and bids can be made on prototype and samples. We will also have an 'assertive fashion show'. You will examine our on-line presence through our prototype portal.

Sept 22 (11pm-?)

After Party (to be confirmed)

Come and celebrate with us at a 'secret' location.

September 22, 2006 onwards

Select items will be available in the Mendel Art Gallery Store to purchase.

website formatted by Jenalene Antony

MEDIA RELEASES

check out our coverage in the sheaf http://www.thesheaf.com/index.php?

option=com_docman&task=cat_view&gid=85&Itemid=64

If you can be good to your neighbours, to your family, to your friends, and to the people that you come in contact with everyday, war eliminates itself. For most, art is something abstract. Artistic expression is best left on the fringes of mainstream society – part of an illusory higher culture that has no real bearing on everyday life. But one U of S team is trying to change all that, and reaffi rm the belief that art can in fact change the world. Samsara Unlimited, the brainchild of U of S MFA student Pravin Pillay, is an artist collective that is hoping to make the world a better place through art – and they plan to do it in a very unusual way. “Most people think about art as the typical sculpture, painting, drawing,” Pillay says. “What we are talking about here is artwork as a system — socially engaged art.” While artists tend to shy away from the corporate world, Pillay, who received a Master’s in Business Administration from McGill before making the shift to the art world, has found a place for his art right in the middle of consumer culture. Samsara Unlimited acts essentially like a small corporation. They have a logo; included in their media package is a company profi le complete with See LEED on page A5 Capitalist art: cultivating creativity in consumer culture **CHARLES HAMILTON Editor-in-Chief See SAMSARA on page A3 SAMSARA**

continued from A1 a mission statement and a FAQ page. They are selling limited edition t-shirts, baseball caps, and a line of environmentally friendly bathroom products. They even have advertisements in bathroom stalls. But more than products – even more than the art itself – Samsara Unlimited is selling an idea. “I think that everybody has that creativity,” Pillay says. “Our question was, how do you act as catalyst? How do organize that creative energy in a way that it actually starts to shift the system?” Essentially, Samsara Unlimited is trying to transform artistic creativity into something tangible -- something that could make a difference in the real world. Instead of restricting art to its usual alcove – the galleries, the museums, the exhibits – Samsara Unlimited is attempting to bring art, and the political messages within it, into the public sphere, hoping that it will have a real impact on people’s lives. One very effective way to do that is through the world of commodity. “We want to create a little access point for people living in the world of commodity,” he says. “Use a language that people understand already in order to get them socially engaged.” Unlike ordinary corporations, whose focus is primarily on fi nancial gain, Samsara Unlimited remains true to its artistic ideals. They are focused on the profi t of creativity, compassion and social responsibility. All their products, which are in fact little pieces of art, are produced in fair trade and fair wage environments. This sort of grassroots approach is what Samsara is interested in applying to world issues. “There are lots of people who can do the big stuff,” he says. “Institutions are set up for that. For us it’s all about doing big things in small communities.” Samsara plans to donate all their profi ts from this show to a project in Tshelanyemba, Zimbabwe. The project, which is supervised by U of S graduate Sylvia Cholodnuik, focuses on providing education for orphans in the town that has been ravaged by HIV/AIDS. “We generate this excess thing called capital, and we don’t need it so we give it away to the people who need it most,” Pillay explains. “If we raise 500 dollars, that pays for all the children’s textbooks in the village for a year...that kind of investment has really high return.” Despite its seemingly genuine intentions, Samsara Unlimited is sure to come under criticism from both artists and activists alike. Artists typically harbour some resentment for the commercial world, believing that their work is something more than a mere consumer product. Reducing artwork to a money making venture seems contrary to the entire notion of artistic integrity. But Samsara insists it is “interested in neither fi nancial profi t for the sake of fi nancial profi t, nor creativity for the sake of creativity.” Rather they are looking for a hybrid between these two worlds. “It is this kind of art that threatens the art establishment,” Pillay explains. “Some artists would say that Samsara Unlimited is not artwork, and some designers and business people would say that we are not involved in product development. We are something different.” Art is life, life is art to artist collective J**UMP AROUND Models get socially engaged thanks to Samsara Unlimited Samsara Unlimited will be showing at the Snelgrove Art Gallery from September 12 thro For more information visit www.samsaraunlimited.com**

MEDIA RELEASES

july

PRESS RELEASE: Contemporary Art Meets Entrepreneurship and Activism

(July 6, 2006: FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE)

Al Hack Concepts announces a collaborative contemporary art and private sector initiative to develop a product line promoting the integration of humanitarian and ecological values. The experimental product development and marketing process combines the talents of local creative producers with the savvy of international entrepreneurial business to generate a creative community of compassion. The resulting product line will be marketed under the brand name Samsara Unlimited. The objective of Samsara Unlimited is to create an ecology that transmutes creative capital into financial capital and produces seemingly mass produced consumer goods that actually engender the qualities we seek in works of fine art: reflection, contemplation, and call to action.

Products range from collector type artworks printed on silk wall hangings from four to nine meters long, to similar prints on T-shirts and post cards. Shoppers and gallery goers will also find products like laughing Buddhas in the form of chocolate truffles that may cause the purchaser or viewer to question: is this a sacred icon? Is it literally a consumable product? Or is it a piece of art to be admired and collected? And what, if any, is the difference between these categories?

Al Hack Concepts invites the public to celebrate the Samsara Unlimited brand launch and sample sale at its concept store on September 22 from 7pm until 11pm in the Gordon Snelgrove Art Gallery located in the Murray Building at the University of Saskatchewan. Admission is free. All profits from the sample sale will be donated to the Tshelanyemba Community Project which in the past has developed programs for orphans with HIV/AIDS in rural Zimbabwe.

Guests are welcome to visit the concept store and view or pre-purchase many of the unique art and consumer items fresh from the Al Hack Concepts development lab during regular business hours from September 12-22.

The initial idea for Samsara Unlimited was developed by Master of Fine Arts candidate Pravin Pillay as a central part of his MFA graduate exhibition. Mr. Pillay completed his undergraduate fine arts training at the Emily Carr Institute of Art and Design in Vancouver and also holds an MBA from McGill University in Montreal. As a founding member of Doctors without Borders Canada, Mr. Pillay asserts "with a committed team of creative individuals, anything is possible.

More follows

The real challenge is demonstrating this possibility of seeming impossibility in a way that is accessible to everyone. Gallery based artists, environmental and social justice activists are often challenged by the use of language that is specific to their own communities and interests while they are attempting to communicate to a larger and more comprehensive audience. Al Hack Concepts uses the language of the smart consumer, the tools of business and the spirit of capitalism, combined with the creativity of the artist, craftsperson and designer, to open a way for people to actively participate in the creation of an ecology of compassion. If people are using brands to display their status in society and to define themselves, Samsara Unlimited, gives an individual, through the items they purchase, a chance to identify themselves with a process that emphasizes the importance integrating the ideas of social justice, environmentalism, and entrepreneurial activity in the formation of civil society."

Al Hack Concepts would like to recognize the following private sector and creative partners who have contributed their ideas and energy to make Samsara Unlimited a reality.

Western Retail Interiors www.westernretail.com

Shankar Perfumeries Works (India) www.shankarperfumery.com

Uof S Bookstore www.usask.ca/consumer_services/bookstore

UofS Dept of Art and Art History www.arts.usask.ca/art

ENDS

Note to editors:

For more information about the Tshelanyemba Community Project please refer to:

http://www.usask.ca/alumni/alumnisite/publications/green_white/issues/fall2004/feature01.php

For more information about Al Hack Concepts and the Samsara Unlimited project refer to:

http://www.alhackconcepts.com (online: August 1, 2006)

or

contact:

Jenalene Antony

Manager of Productions and Publicity

jenalene.antony@gmail.com

Cell: 306.290.2530

Home: 306.933.9383

MEDIA RELEASES

september

PRESS RELEASE: Contemporary Art Meets Entrepreneurship and Activism

(September, 2006: FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE)

Al Hack Concepts announces Samsara Unlimited: a contemporary art and private sector initiative working towards an ecology of compassion. Samsara Unlimited's objective is to combine the talents of **local creative producers** with **entrepreneurial business savvy** to demonstrate inter-disciplinary respect and benefit from a realistic place of cooperation and collaboration. Through experimental design, product development and marketing processes, **Samsara Unlimited** strives to build a sustainable community where members are able to their invest financial and creative surplus into projects of environmental and humanitarian importance.

From **September 11–15** the public is invited to the **Gordon Snelgrove Art Gallery** in the **Murray building** at the **University of Saskatchewan** to view its transformation from gallery into **Samsara Unlimited** facility. Complete with offices, concept lab, retail front and manufacturing space, the **Samsara Unlimited** facility strives towards an ecology that transmutes creative capital into financial capital. From **September 18-22** during regular business hours conscious consumers are welcome to preview, reserve bids and purchase prototypes and samples from the **Samsara Unlimited** facility.

All profits will be donated to the Tshelanyemba Community Project, a sustainable community project in Zimbabwe Africa that Sylvia Cholodnuik has been supporting as a non-registered charity. Through her work with the local AIDS/HIV orphanage, school system and hospital, Sylvia has inspired and mobilized the Tshelanyemba community to seek self sustainability.

On **September 22 from 7-11pm, Samsara Unlimited** will be hosting its Brand Launch at the Gorden Sneldgrove Art Gallery. The final opportunity for purchases and bids on the product line, the night's events include the **Samsara Unlimited** Assertive Fashion show and an information session about the Tshelanyemba Community project. Admission is free.

Al Hack Concepts would like to recognize the following private sector and creative partners who have contributed their ideas and energy to make **Samsara Unlimited** a reality.

Western Retail Interiors www.westernretail.com
Shankar Perfumeries Works (India) www.shankarperfumery.com
Disc Imaging Group www.discimaging.ca
Dharma Chakra Imports www.tkesur.ca
Uof S Bookstore www.usask.ca/consumer_services/bookstore
UofS Dept of Art and Art History www.arts.usask.ca/art

Note to editors:

For more information about the Tshelanyemba Community Project please refer to:

For more information about Al Hack Concepts and the Samsara Unlimited project refer to:
www.samsaraunlimited.com

Contact: Jenalene Antony: Manager of Productions and Publicity

306.290.2530 or 306.384.3535

NEWS

we're in the beer garden!

samsara unlimited

towards an ecology of compassion

CONTACT

CONTACT

jenalene antony

jenalene@alhackconcepts.com

306.290.2530

www.samsaraunlimited.com

Sylvia Cholodnuik

Tshelanyemba Community Project Founder

The non-registered charity that all of the proceeds from the

Samsara Unlimited concept store will be donated to.

for more information please see http://www.usask.ca/alumni/

alumnisite/publications/green_white/issues/fall2004/feature01.php

click for more images

collage community bike program

a community bike program gets people out of their cars, excersizing some bikes and contributing to an environmentally friendly community.

the idea behind pink bike is to see a pink bike in your local uofs bike stand and take it for a ride because we want you to love our bikes as much as we do!

contact jenalene.antony@gmail.com and she'll help you set up your pink bike!

free the free bikes!

all collage bikes were donated via recycling by local freecyclers . check out http://www.freecycle.org/

check out www.samsaraunlimited.com

our Team

the glue

OUR EXECUTIVE

OUR ASSOCIATES

samsara unlimited

towards an ecology of compassion

our EXECUTIVE

Al Hack
Al Hack Concepts, Founder/ Ceo

Pravin Pillay
Samsara Unlimited Division, Business Manager/Designer

Nissa Pillay
Samsara Unlimited Division, Product Designer

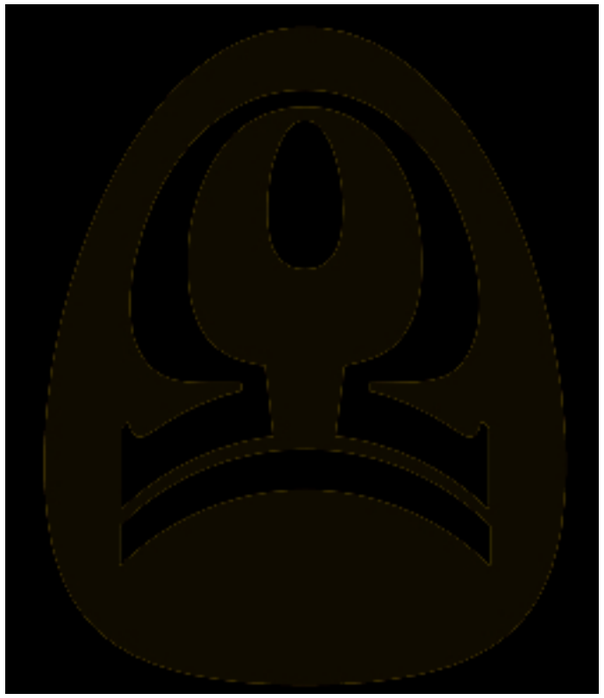
Jenalene Antony
Samsara Unlimited Division, Production & Publicity Manager

Alexa Hainsworth
AlHack Concepts/Samsara Unlimited Division, Unit Liason

Al Hack

Al Hack Concepts, Founder/Ceo

Al Hack is the founder of Al Hack Concepts and originator of Samsara Unlimited as an idea. Although Al Hack is not a visible part of the Samsara Unlimited network, Al Hack remains active behind the scenes and takes a very strong interest in the final outcome of Samsara Unlimited. Al Hack inspires us all in Samsara Unlimited and is responsible for our slogan “towards an ecology of compassion”



Pravin Pillay

Samsara Unlimited Division, Business Manager/ Designer

Pravin Pillay joined Samsara Unlimited at its conceptual phase and was employed by Al Hack to transform the idea behind the Samsara Unlimited idea int. o reality. He began active engagement with Samsara Unlimited while working on his MFA at the University of Saskatchewan in early 2006. Having a long history of working as a humanitarian and environmental activist, Al Hack considered Mr. Pillay someone who would have an intuitive understanding of the principles behind Samsara Unlimited. Mr. Pillay spends part of his time developing products but maintains his real artwork is business itself. He holds a B.Arts and Science from McMaster University, a BFA from the Emily Carr Institute of Art and Design and an MBA from McGill University

OUR EXECUTIVE

Nissa Pillay

Samsara Unlimited Division, Product Designer

Nissa Pillay is responsible for developing most of Samsara Unlimited's products. She is said to be the real brains of the operation. Nissa is a visual artist and holds a BFA from the Emily Carr Institute of Art and Design.

OUR ASSOCIATES

Jenalene Antony

Samsara Unlimited Division, Production & Publicity Manager

Jenalene Antony manages all aspects of production and publicity. Her enthusiasm and drive is a source of energy for all those involved with the Samsara Unlimited. Jenalene comes to Samsara Unlimited with an education in the arts and design.

Alexa Hainsworth

AlHack Concepts/Samsara Unlimited Division, Unit Liason

Ms. Hainsworth is said to have the personal ear of Al Hack. She brings her creative skill as an artist and her ability think not only outside of the box but how to reconstruct the box and make it think that it is a really good looking sphere.

our ASSOCIATES

the glue

Sylvia Cholodnuik

Tshelanyemba Community Project Founder

Models

Participating Artists & Artisans

Sponsors

our MODELS

because beauty is really about a sense of inner grace

ALLYSHA

ALEXA

GLORIA

LACEY

LINDSAY

MARTINE

MONIQUE

SOFYA

TARA

ALLYSHA

Model

Thank you for modelling for Samsara Unlimited. We miss you but we wish you the best of luck in Montreal!

ALEXA

Model

GLORIA

Model

Thank you for helping with the fashion shoot on such short notice and hopfully you make it back on time for the September 22 after party!

LACEY

Model

LINDSAY

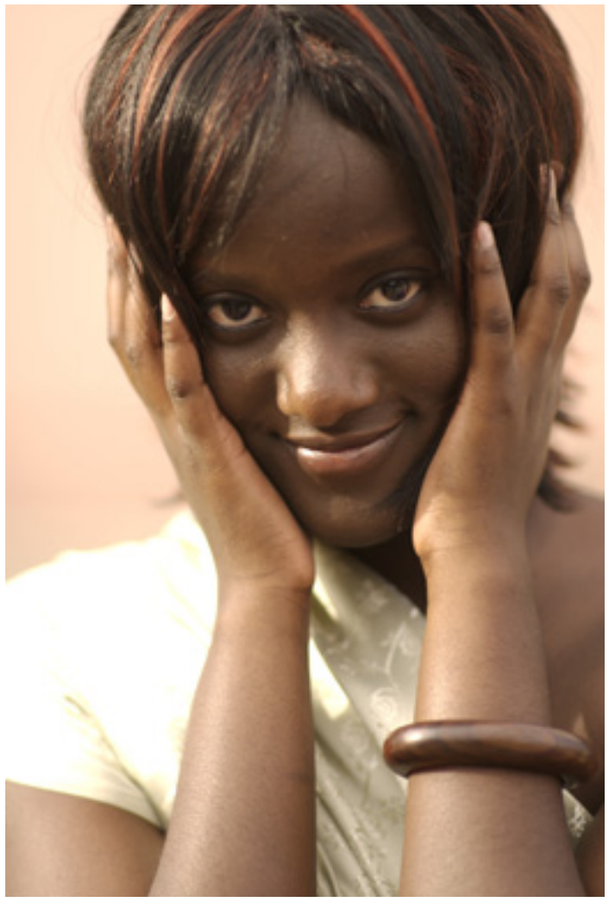
Model

Thanks for jumping right in as artist, model and interior decorator!

MARTINE

Model

The original inspiration for the Fashion shoot



MONIQUE

Model

BMX Biker Babe

SOFYA

Model

I am proud and excited to be involved with Samsara Unlimited. My name is Sofya, Im originally from Ethiopia and have been living in Canada for over ten years. I am a student at the University of Saskatchewan majoring in International studies in hopes of one day working with the UN. I enjoy reading a good book, playing sports; mainly soccer because it is the best sport in the world, staying focused and being positive.

TARA

Model

Local songstress

PARTICIPATING ARTISTS & ARTISANS

.CHRIS CORTEZ - PHOTOGRAPHER

JAMES POPOFF -ARTIST

LYNNE ERIKSON -ARTIST & SOAP MAKER

JESSE THORNTON - FINE WOOD CRAFTSPERSON

JOSHUA FORREST- PERFORMANCE ARTIST

MONIQUE ROY - INTERIOR PAINTER

TODD BURTON- ARTIST

JULIE HUTCHINS - SEAMSTRESS

GEORGE HUTCHINS - HANDYMAN

MAXINE PROCTOR - ARTIST

MAJA MONTGOMERY - ARTIST

CHRIS ALLEN - PRINTMAKER

JEAN-SEBASTIEN GAUTHIER - SCULPTOR

LEE MASON - WORD SMITH

CHRIS CORTEZ

PHOTOGRAPHER

What I do: Student, International Studies, University of Saskatchewan

Why I am Involved:

I am not a photographer, just a sensitive person who likes to take pictures.I heard that statment somewhere and it resonates with me. I like business and I likes the concept of compassion as profit. I wanted to do something to support the projec and I t felt that is was really important to contribute the one thing that I am really passionate about.

JOSHUA FORREST

PREFORMANCE ARTIST

Josh is a committed young man who is excited and proud to be affiliated
with the Samsara project. He believes in the ideas and the spirit that all
of the people in the team possess. Josh believes in art that serves not
only the individual, but also other people, animals, and the environment.
Josh believes that if that integration can take place then art will always
be necessary whether it is widely known or not.

TODD BURTON

ARTIST

When Todd was asked why he was involved with Samsara Unlimited he replied:

"Because it's not about me."

our SPONSORS

we never could have done it with out you

WESTERN INTERIOR RETAILERS

SHANKAR PERFUMERIES WORKS

DISC IMAGING GROUP

CAPTIVE AUDIENCE

TYSON BROWN

DHARMA CHAKRA IMPORTS

PADDOCK WOOD BREWING

GORDON SNELGROVE GALLERY

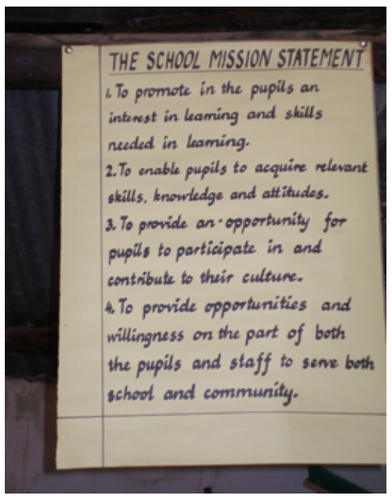
U OF S BOOKSTORE **- Betty Jantz**

U OF S DEPT OF ART AND ART HISTORY

Tshelanyemba Community Project

The following images and their captions were selected and written by Sylvia.

The photos were taken during her earliest and her latest trip.

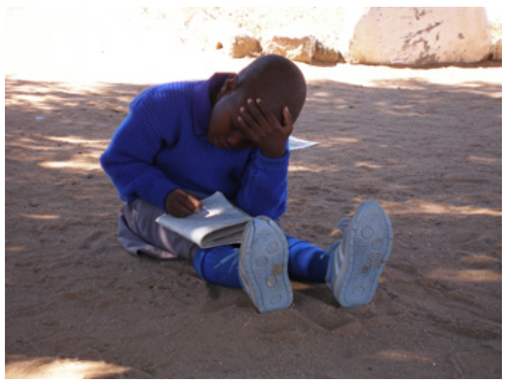


Mazwi Primary School's mission statement

coming home from school

a typical homestead

Tshelanyemba Primary school - fence is almost complete.Three wings have been added to the school since 1995.There are approximately 560 children regularily attending the school.



deep concentration

Gogo looking after some of her grandchildren

Cue to see the Doctor. There is 1 Doctor for 85,000 people.

Cosmang enjoying an art class

Little girl in the children's ward

Thenjiwe - abandoned orphan being raised by the nurses at the Tshelanyemba Hospital

Games day - a children's highlight

Hope with his class

Decent Dube bedridden for a minimum of 2 months with a fracture

enjoys colouring

PRODUCTS & SERVICES

DESIGN

SAMSARA PRODUCTS

WEARABLE PRODUCTS

EDIBLE ICONIC PRODUCTS

PRODUCTS TO SOOTHE YOUR KARMA

REPRODUCTIVE ART

DECORATIVE ART

SAMSARA SERVICES

NETWORKING/COMMUNICATION

WEARABLE PRODUCTS

T-SHIRTS

WOMEN'S HI-END T-SHIRTS

WOMEN'S ACTIVE SPORTS JACKET

WOMEN'S FASHION WEAR

SAMSARA HEAD GEAR

SAMSARA TIBETAN CRAFTED CLOTHES

SAMSARA TIBETAN CRAFTED JEWELRY

T-SHIRTS

Printed in four colors using a set of hands of a South Asian elder who came to Toronto in the early sixties during the first wave of immigration from Apartheid South Africa. Designed for artsmart casual wear. T-shirts appear to be massed produced because they have the same image on all of them, however, they are each a unique work of art because they have different text. The illusion of mass production as producing standardized items is revealed. Each item appears to be the same but are so only in pattern. The editioned aphorism printed on each shirt points to the same place/non place and is a key to the illusion of difference.

click for aphorisms available.

Price: $20

click for more images

samsara unlimited

towards an ecology of compassion

T-SHIRT APHORISMS

This could be an interesting Story

Same game, different Content

This moment is ground Zero

In consideration of the Posthuman

Art is capitalism at its Finest

The illusion has become Real

We are at the Gate

Who else missed the Mystery?

Excess desire, breeds Poverty

Trapped in Heaven

Everywhere is Neo-tokyo

Albert, Bertrand and Her.

How many After?

How many Before?

A thousand gods are Watching

Purgatory has its Benefits

This cage without a Door

The full catastrophe

Nothing is to be clung To

Da kine, Brah

Dangerous Parallel

I abandoned my ship and escaped Oblivion

I can't Exhale

Finn is awake Again

Goodbye Again

Making a hell of Heaven

More than Human

Life is bigger than I Thought

All these moments already Lost

We are all Monsters

More than Enough

Real disaster is Divine

Time to Sleep

Storm Ahead

Our unconquerable Will

This gate without a Gate

Time to get out of Wonderland

It was Worthwhile

We are already Dust

Let's get Started

Toys are Us

This unique condition is nothing Special

Listening to the machines Singing

click for sample images

T-SHIRT IMAGES

WOMEN'S HI-END T-SHIRTS

These have a similar graphic as the regular t-shirts except the design of these wearable line is more stylish and only the ones you see on display will be printed with our unique graphic. Even though these are generic high end shirts, with our graphic they are now a valuable unique garment that says a lot about your values and how you spend your money.

Price: $25-$35

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WOMEN'S ACTIVE SPORTS JACKET

This unique jacket is the only one of its kind in the world. It had a life as a cross-country ski jacket that was manufactured in the 1970's in Austria. With our prominent logo – this retro/slick fashion item can be used as a warm up jacket for yoga or running. This item was featured in our fashion shoot. We ask that the person who bids on this item be aware of at least one international or local environmental or social issue so that you can speak about it when people ask you about the jacket. It would be even better if you were actively involved in working on one the issues important to your community and the world.

Price: Open Bid

click for more images

samsara unlimited

towards an ecology of compassion

WOMEN'S SPORT JACKET

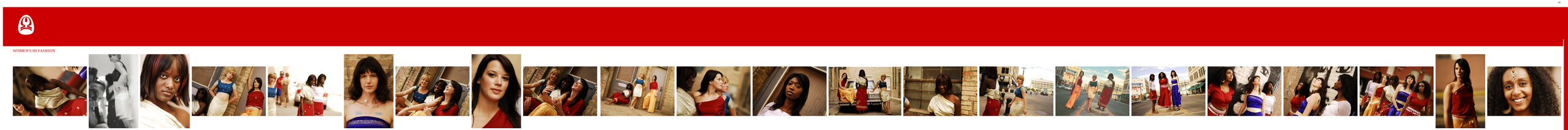
WOMEN'S FASHION WEAR

These unique items are sewn from saree material but are really generic designs from Thailand and the western world. Each garment is unique and only one of the particular material-pattern-colour will ever be made. Most of the models from our fashion shoot will be available at the Brand Launch to discuss local and international issues regarding humanity and the environment.

Price: Open Bid

click for more images

WOMEN'S HI FASHION



SAMSARA HEADGEAR

These stylish black caps come from a generic design. We have strategically placed our logo on them so that people will notice them and ask the wearer about the logo. We ask purchasers of these hats to be aware of humanitarian and environmental issues, so that you can engage people in the Samsara Unlimited project. In that way you become part of our collaboration network and active in generating the field of compassion.

Price: $15

SAMSARA TIBETAN CRAFTED CLOTHES

These clothes have been hand-made by Tibetan refugees living in India and brought to use by a Tibetan friend living in Saskatoon. We think that the clothes are stylin' . Check out their site www.tkesur.ca

Price: various

click for more images

SAMSARA TIBETAN CRAFTED JEWLERY

These necklaces, bracelets and chokers have been handcrafted by Tibetan refugees living in India. We have brought them to you so that the folks that made them can earn a livelihood.

Price: various

ART MOLDED FROM CHOCOLATE

BUDDHA-IN-A-BOWL

CHOCOLATE DIAS

EMPTY CHOCOLATE BUDDHA HEAD

samsara unlimited

towards an ecology of compassion

BUDDHA-IN-A-BOWL

(If you meet the Buddha as chocolate – eat him)

These assorted laughing Buddha truffles require at least three bytes to finish, rest upon a bed of SmartiesTM and come in a bowl that is design form Saimese fighting fish. Most people eat the solid head first and then discover a delicious 'secret' interior. Once you have consumed the Buddha, he'll be gone and you'll be left with just some Smarties TM in a fighting fish bowl. Will you eat the Buddha? Will you put him on a shelf? Will you give him to a friend? Will you keep him because he is the part of the first edition of this production and will become more valuable as he slowly converts into an art icon?

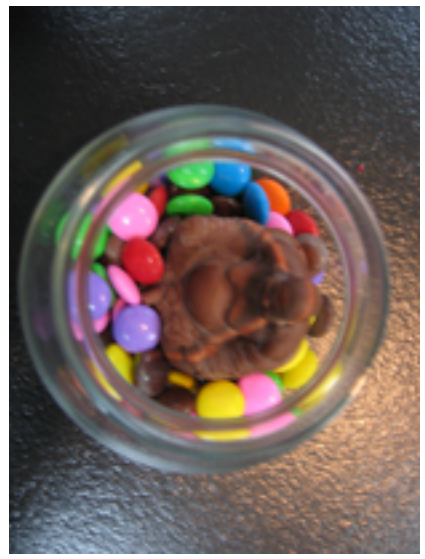
Price: 10$ each

click for more images

samsara unlimited

towards an ecology of compassion

CHOCOLATE BUDDHA-IN-A-BOWL



CHOCOLATE DIAS

Replica of traditional South Asian lamp used for sacred rituals made out of chocolate. Very tasty. 'Dias' is the sanksrit root of our word 'day'. One day we will make an entire temple made out of chocolate. So you will be able to collect/eat all the chocolate icons and artifacts.

Price: $3 each

samsara unlimited

towards an ecology of compassion

EMPTY CHOCOLATE BUDDHA HEAD

FILLED WITH MASS PRODUCED CANDY

Chocolate Buddha heads filled with SmartiesTM, SkittlesTM, or gummy bears. Eat the interior or eat the container. These heads are very expensive to make because they take a lot of chocolate and they often break in production. However, they are quite unique – for the art collector or chocolate lover only.

Price: Minimum bid to be established

click for more images

samsara unlimited

towards an ecology of compassion

EMPTY CHOCOLATE BUDDHA HEAD

PRODUCTS TO SOOTHE YOUR KARMA

INCENSE

INCENSE BOX

MASSAGE & BATH OIL

BATH SALTS

FACE, BODY, AND HAND CREMES/MASSAGE OILS

'*Fresh*' Spray DEODORIZOR/DISINFECTANT

BUDDHA SOAP

BUDDHA ON A ROPE

INCENSE

This premium quality incense with a touch of aromatherapy is hand-rolled in India for Samsara Unlimited. We requested that it be WHO certified so that our already healthy customers would get only the best incense. What makes it special is that each package is actually a unique artwork but is also a variation of the information describing the product.

Price: 3$/box (12 sticks)

INCENSE BOX

A local artisan, Jesse Thornton, designs and manufactures our fine wood boxes. Only for the incense connoisseur.

Price: $60 ea

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MASSAGE & BATH OIL

- **Rejuvenating**
- **Relaxing**
- **Sensual**
- **Relief**

(click on desired state for details)

100% pure fragrant essential oil in a base of almond and walnut oils. Each bottle has an editioned art label on it.

Price: $15 ea

click here **for more images**

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PRODUCTS

PRODUCTS TO SOOTHE YOUR KARMA

Contains: 100%pure fragrant essential oils of bergamot, grapefruit, lemon, orange & geranium in a base of almond & walnut oil.

Directions: can be used as a massage oil or add a few drops to your bath

Warning: DO NOT USE IF PREGNANT

Rejuvenating

massage & bath oil

towards an ecology of compassion

with uplifting pure plant essences of bergamot, grapefruit, lemon, orange & geranium

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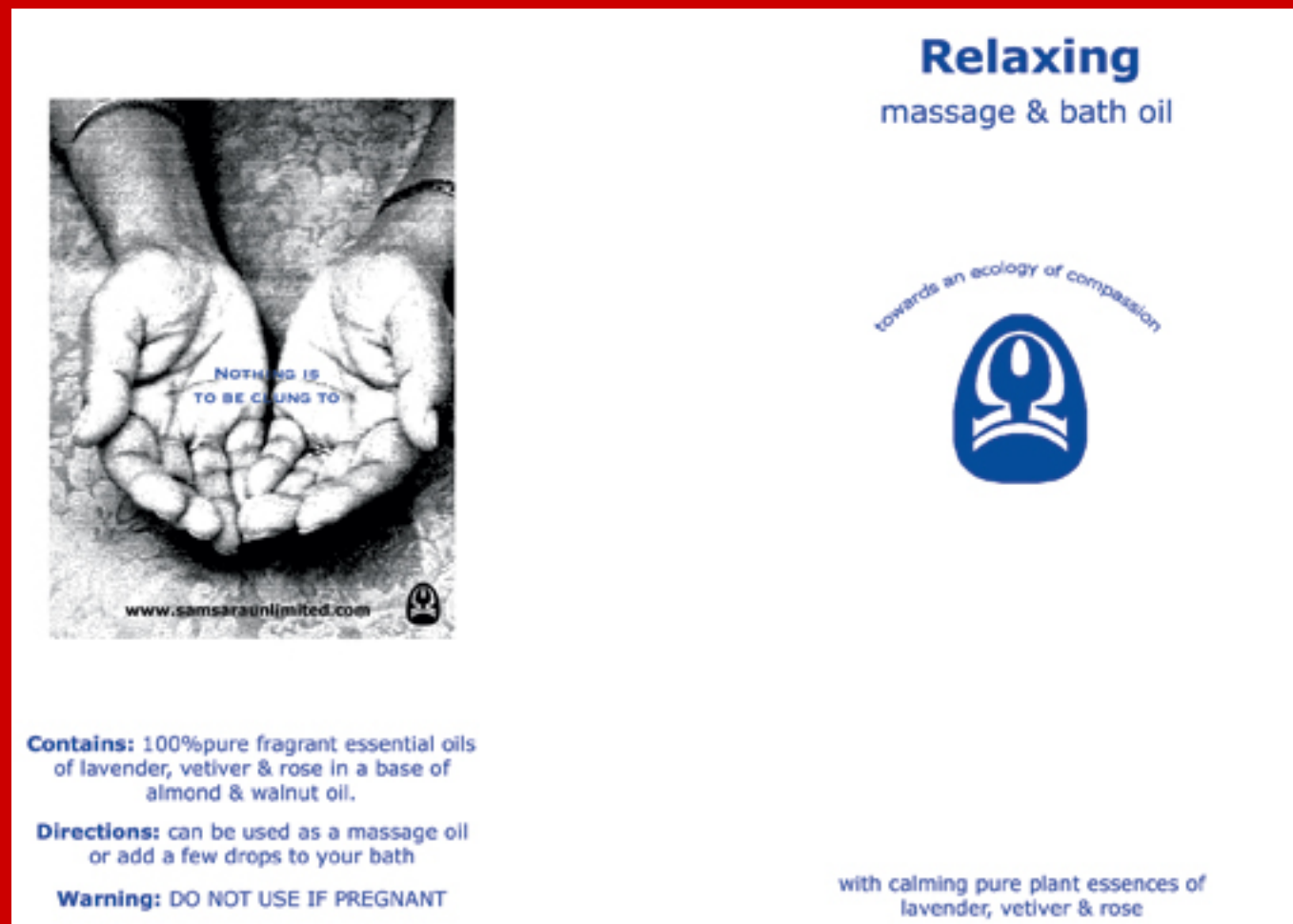
PRODUCTS

PRODUCTS TO SOOTHE YOUR KARMA



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PRODUCTS

PRODUCTS TO SOOTHE YOUR KARMA

Contains: 100%pure fragrant essential oils of sandalwood & vetiver in a base of almond & walnut oil.

Directions: can be used as a massage oil or add a few drops to your bath

Sensual

massage & bath oil

towards an ecology of compassion

with erotic pure plant essences of sandalwood & vetiver

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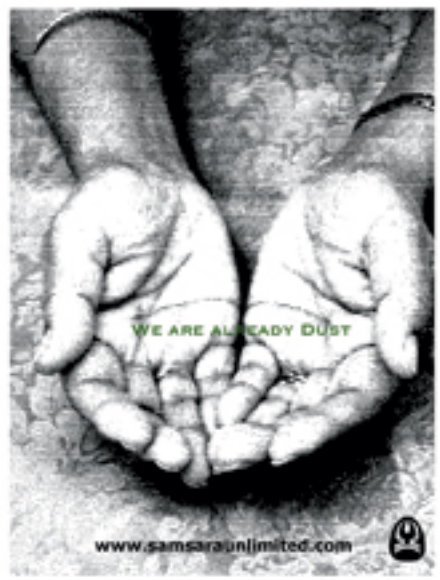
PRODUCTS

PRODUCTS TO SOOTHE YOUR KARMA



Contains: 100%pure fragrant essential oils of peppermint, melaleuca, & camphor in a base of almond & walnut oil.

Directions: can be used as a massage oil or add a few drops to your bath

Warning: DO NOT USE IF PREGNANT

Relief

massage & bath oil

towards an ecology of compassion

with ache & pain relieving pure plant essences of peppermint, melaleuca, & camphor

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MASSAGE & BATH OILS

BATH SALTS

100% pure fragrant essential oils in a base of epsom salts. Each container has an editioned art label on it.

Price: $15 ea

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FACE, BODY, AND HAND CREMES/MASSAGE OILS

- **Anticellulite**
- **Renewal**
- **Baby 1 & 2**
- **Joy 1 & 2**
- **sensual 1 & 2**

(click here to see desired formulation)

100% pure fragrant essential oils in a base of certified organic oil of coconut, vitamin E, sunflower seed, sweet almond, apricot kernel, avocado and wheat germ. Each container has an editioned art label on it.

Price: $10 ea

click here for more images

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PRODUCTS

PRODUCTS TO SOOTHE YOUR KARMA

SAME STORY
DIFFERENT CONTENT
www.samsaraunlimited.com

Contains: 100%pure fragrant essential oils of lavender, orange, & lemon in a base of certified organic oil of coconut, vitamin e, sunflower seed, sweet amond, apricot kernal, avocado & wheat germ
Directions: rub into skin or warm gently to melt into massage oil.
Warning: DO NOT USE IF PREGNANT

TIME TO SLEEP
www.samsaraunlimited.com

Contains: 100%pure fragrant essential oils of lime & eucalyptus, in a base of certified organic oil of coconut, vitamin e, sunflower seed, sweet amond, apricot kernal, avocado & wheat germ
Directions: rub into skin or warm gently to melt into massage oil.
Warning: DO NOT USE IF PREGNANT

TRAPPED IN HEAVEN
www.samsaraunlimited.com

Contains: 100%pure fragrant essential oils of chamomile, lavender & orange, in a base of certified organic oil of coconut, vitamin e, sunflower seed, sweet amond, apricot kernal, avocado & wheat germ
Directions: rub into skin or warm gently to melt into massage oil.
Warning: DO NOT USE IF PREGNANT

THIS GATE WITHOUT A GATE
www.samsaraunlimited.com

Contains: 100%pure fragrant essential oils of chamomile, lavender & orange, in a base of certified organic oil of coconut, vitamin e, sunflower seed, sweet amond, apricot kernal, avocado & wheat germ
Directions: rub into skin or warm gently to melt into massage oil.
Warning: DO NOT USE IF PREGNANT

Anticellulite
cream/massage oil

towards an ecology of compassion

Renewal
cream/massage oil

towards an ecology of compassion

Baby
cream/massage oil

towards an ecology of compassion

Baby
cream/massage oil

towards an ecology of compassion

ALL THESE MOMENTS
ALREADY LOST
www.samsaraunlimited.com

Contains: 100%pure fragrant essential oils of jasmine, vanilla & sandalwood in a base of certified organic oil of coconut, vitamin e, sunflower seed, sweet amond, apricot kernal, avacado & wheat germ
Directions: rub into skin or warm gently to melt into massage oil.

OUR UNCONQUERABLE WILL
www.samsaraunlimited.com

Contains: 100%pure fragrant essential oils of jasmine, vanilla & sandalwood in a base of certified organic oil of coconut, vitamin e, sunflower seed, sweet amond, apricot kernal, avacado & wheat germ
Directions: rub into skin or warm gently to melt into massage oil.

THIS UNIQUE CONDITION
IS NOTHING SPECIAL
www.samsaraunlimited.com

Contains: 100%pure fragrant essential oils of bergamot, ylang-ylang, & geranium in a base of certified organic oil of coconut, vitamin e, sunflower seed, sweet amond, apricot kernal, avacado & wheat germ
Directions: rub into skin or warm gently to melt into massage oil.
Warning: DO NOT USE IF PREGNANT

LET'S GET STARTED
www.samsaraunlimited.com

Contains: 100%pure fragrant essential oils of bergamot, ylang-ylang, & geranium in a base of certified organic oil of coconut, vitamin e, sunflower seed, sweet amond, apricot kernal, avacado & wheat germ
Directions: rub into skin or warm gently to melt into massage oil.
Warning: DO NOT USE IF PREGNANT

Sensual
cream/massage oil

towards an ecology of compassion

Sensual
cream/massage oil

towards an ecology of compassion

Joy
cream/massage oil

towards an ecology of compassion

Joy
cream/massage oil

towards an ecology of compassion

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FACE, BODY AND HAND CREMES/MASSAGE OIL

samsara unlimited

towards an ecology of compassion

'FRESH' Pump Aerosol

Anti-bacterial/Anti-Viral and it smells great

100% pure fragrant essential oils (including lavender, eucalyptus, oregano, teatree and in a water base. Each container has an editioned art label on it.

Price: $15 ea

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BUDDHA SOAP

Wash your karma away with these 100% vegetable soaps of a reclining laughing Buddha. Made by a local soap maker for Samsara Unlimited using our molds. Made by local soap artisan Lynne Erickson.

Price: $7 ea

BUDDHA ON A ROPE (coming soon)

a standing laughing soap Buddha on a rope made of 100% vegetable products for Samsara Unlimited by a local soap maker using our molds.

Price: $10 ea

REPRODUCTIVE ART

The use of the same images from our higher-end product line - designed to be affordable and collectable. All are editioned.

HAND PRINTS

POSTCARDS

FASHION ART

ADVERTISING ART

AL HACK BUSINESS CARD MANDALA

HAND PRINTS

Printed images of hands on fine art paper. Designed for art collectors. If you wanted to purchase one of our original silk wall hangings but did not have the space then these should fit nicely. The images come in different colours so that you can co-ordinate with any room.

Price: $50 each; Set of 5 for $200

click for more images

HAND PRINTS

POSTCARDS

More or less the image and aphorisms as printed on the t-shirts but printed card stock. Really affordable art. Collect them all. 13 different cards.

Price: $ 2 per card (13 available). Sets signed by Al Hack

$30

click for more images

samsara unlimited

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PRODUCTS REPRODUCTIVE ART

Postcard Images

FASHION ART

Our models chose to work with us because they are interesting in speaking on social and environmental issues at our promotional events.

click here **for our promotional fashion images**

Price: $ 20

Fashion Images

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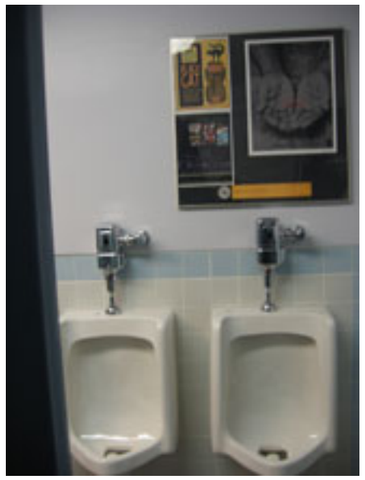
ADVERTISING ART



click for source images used from postcard series

Editioned images are used in our promotional campaign in bathrooms and on garbage cans. These images are based on our postcard series.

Price: $ 20

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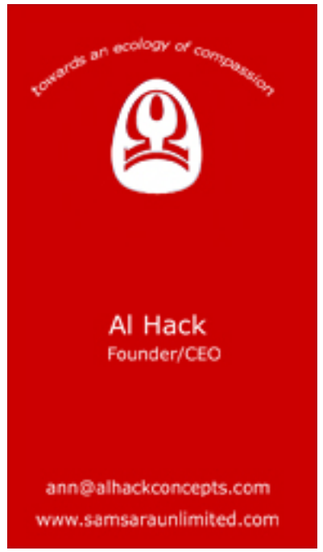
AL HACK BUSINESS CARD MANDALA



Business cards from the founder arranged for contemplation.

Price: $ 25

click here **for larger image**

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PRODUCTS

REPRODUCTIVE ART

DECORATIVE ART

High-end art that belongs with a collector or gallery.

WALL HANGINGS - COMING TO CANADA SERIES

DISTRACTED BUDDHA

samsara unlimited

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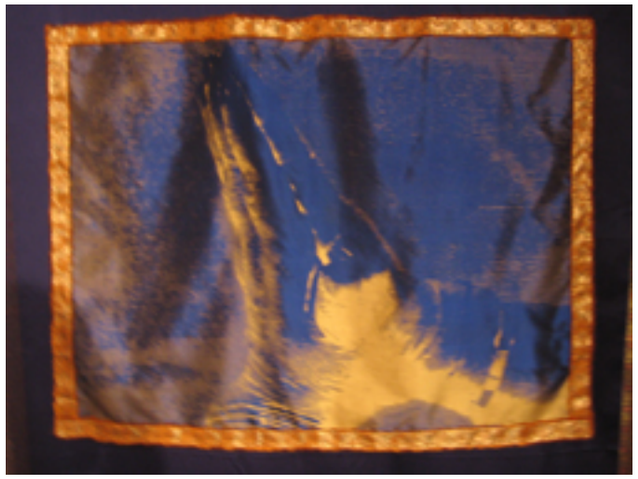
WALL HANGINGS - COMING TO CANADA SERIES

Various hands of South Asian Elders printed on saree materials with Sanskrit aphorisms from Al Hack. These items were designed for collectors and art galleries

Price: $ 500 Minimum bid

click for more images

Wallhangings



DISTRACTED BUDDHA

This Buddha is covered in thumbtacks. Some will fall out, but this is good. This interactive work gives you the pleasure of sticking thumbtacks in a 3-D abstraction of someone trying to meditate. The feeling is like popping bubble-wrap but more fun because you are actually sticking thumbtacks into a piece of art and an icon at the same time.

Price: Minimum bid to be established.

NETWORKING/COMMUNICATION

SAMSARA UNLIMITED PORTAL

SAMSARA UNLIMITED PORTAL

The portal is in its early phases and will not be fully functional. However you will be able to access the constructed portions from the Gordon Snelgrove Gallery

our COMPANY PROFILE

introduction to samsara unlimited

Samsara Unlimited, a division of AI Hack Concepts, is a for profit design company and art system that focuses on applying design principles to art objects, consumer products and other systems. Samsara Unlimited strives to extend the flow of financial and creative capital to small groups or individuals who themselves aim to facilitate the development of locally sustainable systems centered on the integration of environmental and humanitarian values. We intend to be a catalyst in developing an ecology of compassion and consider the financial dimension of profit critical but secondary to this goal.

The creative and business partners involved with the Samsara Unlimited network are interested in neither financial profit for the sake of financial profit nor creativity for the sake of creativity. We do observe these motivating principles in operation in the business and art worlds and use our critical awareness of them to generate creative and effective production methods, tools and products in accord with the Samsara Unlimited mission.

The products, services and idea systems that we develop take the form of contemporary conceptual socially engaged art. Our objective is to extend art objects and processes into business operations and into everyday life thorough our experimental design, product development and marketing process. Similarly, under our collaborative model we encourage the development of like-minded grass roots businesses by providing networking tools, examples of best practices and the opportunity to use Samsara Unlimited as an umbrella brand.

We believe that when people are fulfilled creatively, live in accord with nature and are able to pay themselves a fair wage, they become less interested in the culture of accumulation and are more available to focus their financial and creative surplus on projects of environmental and humanitarian importance. Similarly, the items and services that those people need to build their work environment and for their daily living are enhanced by the use of the ideas and aesthetics behind conceptual and socially engaged art.

our MISSION

what we do

To design and develop art products, services and idea systems that maintain the qualities of contemporary conceptual socially engaged art and encourage an ecology of compassion through personal and environmental sustainability.

our HISTORY

where we come from

Al Hack, of Al Hack Concepts inspired the vision of developing an ecology of compassion through a commercial venture based on the values of balance, awareness, respect, creativity, personal sustainability, cooperation and collaboration and pragmatism. Al Hack conceived Samsara Unlimited as an art product and system laboratory to investigate how creative and financial capital could generate a field of compassion. As an organization Samsara Unlimited was limited, but as a field it could inspire ordinary people who were in its proximity to generate their own systems of compassion.

Pravin Pillay, an artist, yogi, and social and environmental activist who happened also to have an MBA was recruited in early 2006 to take Samsara Unlimited from the Al Hack Concepts laboratory and develop the idea for the commercial world.

Al Hack suggested that a good strategy would be to develop a line of products and services that maintained the qualities of conceptual and socially engaged art so that the products and services would actually investigate the assumptions and systems behind their creation. Embodying a business in a social artwork was a way to network the talents, creativity, and energies of artists, activists, business professionals, and grass roots owner/operators into a collaborative force. Al Hack insisted that the art products, services and system ideas should be designed with personal and environmental sustainability in mind since this would help to generate the ground necessary for compassion to become part of everyday living.

our VALUES

what we believe in

Creativity

we believe that creative fulfillment leads to contentment.

Personal Sustainability

we believe that personal sustainability encourages people to work from a place of fearlessness.

Awareness

we attempt to cultivate awareness through our designs and through our operations.

Respect

we encourage respect in all our activities. We believe that respect between individuals can propagate respect between cultures and for the environment.

Collaboration and Cooperation

we realize that we cannot be experts in everything and the Samsara Unlimited Project is ambitious, so we engage the creative energies of likeminded people.

Balance

we think that balance in all things leads to contentment and is a good approach to work and life.

Pragmatism

we are not idealists nor are we pessimists. We are striving to create art products, services, and idea systems that embody the values we hold.

our BUSINESS MODEL

generating compassion, art, and money

The entire Samsara Unlimited organization has been developed around three core ideas: extending a field of compassion through the sale of conceptual art designs; effective management of the Samsara Unlimited operation; a focused community investment strategy.

Our financial capital is generated from the sale of our art products, the contracting of our consulting services, and marketing of our idea systems. All of our operations and designs are inspired by the universal teachings of yoga and the Buddha and can be understood as socially engaged and conceptual artforms. Although our products appear to be consumer products that can be manufactured on a mass scale, each one is actually a unique or editioned handmade artwork that examines the relationship between mass production, art, consumer products, the use of labour in the developing world and marketing. The essence of our art product line inspires an examination of the desires that drive the function of the consumer/spectator as well as the producer/artist and the various ecosystems that they inhabit.

We feel that if people are going to purchase products and services then they should have the option of products and services that embody the aesthetic, critical thinking and idea engagement engendered by contemporary art.

Our financial capital sustains our business operations, our prototype laboratory and our investment in developing a network of sustainable systems in local communities. Investing in extending the field of compassion through a network is the key to our future. We achieve this by developing products and services that like-minded grass roots businesses can use and by investment in people and projects at a grass roots level that fall through the crack of public and private attention and funding. The communities, individuals and projects in which we choose to invest are neither registered charitable organisations, where they are able to initiate extensive fund raising drives nor are there focus of operation located in a geopolitical region where support is readily available.

By keeping our financial capital flowing through the sales of the Samsara Unlimited products and services and through our network development and investment strategy, we aim to enhance the conversion of creative capital into the compassionate capital using material means.

our ORGANIZATIONAL STRUCTURE

the sum of our parts

Product Design and Development Lab:

Where we create our products and services in a fusion of art, craft, commercial product and social and environmental awareness

Business office:

Where our administration, marketing and accounting functions occur

Production/Warehousing:

Where products developed, branded, packaged and prepared for shipping

Portal:

This will be our electronic presence on the World Wide Web and the key to developing the Samsara Unlimited partner network.

samsara unlimited

towards an ecology of compassion

our FUTURE

where we want to be

To ensure that all of our products, services and idea systems are developed with the principles of fair trade, fair wage, and organics and encourage a sustainable relationship with the environment.

To focus on design and prototype development by engaging experts within the Samsara Unlimited/Al Hack Concepts network to manufacture and market our designs.

To generate financial capital that allows us to make significant investments in community based projects

our DESIGN

Read on about the madness behind the method and then check out our PRODUCTS & SERVICES !

DESIGN PRINCIPLES DESIGN METHOD DESIGN PROCESS AESTHETIC & CONCEPTUAL DIMENSIONS DESIGN VISION

our DESIGN PRINCIPLES

We design our art product using the principles of Universal Access. To us art products have typically been designed for specific markets. We prefer to design our products so that as many people as possible can benefit from them. As such we using the following principles in our design process:

Equitable Use

Flexibility in Use

Simple and Intuitive Use

Perceptible Information

Tolerance for Error

Size and Space for Approach and Use

our DESIGN METHOD

Samsara Unlimited utilizes the Vision in Product Design (ViP) developed at the faculty of Industrial Design Engineering at Delft University of Technology in the Netherlands. This method focuses on possibilities rather than on problem solving. ViP focuses on creating a context before designing the product. As such anything that results from a creative process is the product and can be applied across product categories but can be applied to problems in management and social structure

DESIGN PRINCIPLES | DESIGN METHOD | DESIGN PROCESS | AESTHETIC & CONCEPTUAL DIMENSIONS | DESIGN VISION

our DESIGN PROCESS

At Samsara Unlimited our design process starts by examining various factors that form a context and require a particular product to be created for it. We do this by exploring ideas 'ideas, observations, principles, states, developments, beliefs, trends, and obsessions that occur in art and society. This holistic approach to context is then applied to the design features. Consequently we emphasize functionality, performance, production, aesthetics and ergonomics in our products.

During the process:

We hold the design vision from conception to production for each product.

If we are designing a product and do not have the technical or design expertise needed we seek out experts and get them involved.

In our design lab we develop prototypes and test them with potential customers. Then we make adjustments. Our customers are central to our design method. With feedback from them, we are able to create products that are able to generate the results we are seeking.

We keep in mind that the design lab is the key to our future success. We attempt to create a work environment where artistic play is the norm (form follows function, function follows form

We maintain that form follows function and function follows form. That is, these design principles are dynamic such that form and function are worked actively to evolve the product as it moves through the design process.

our AESTHETIC & CONCEPTUAL DIMENSIONS

Our initial art products and services have been designed with guidance from the AI Hack Concepts and are contextualized by three interdependent aesthetic dimensions: financial generation, networking and reproduction.

art as a financial generation system

The transmutation of art ideas into financial capital

Sensory Oriented - edible, fragranced, or tactile products

Packaging Enhancement - recyclable, Iconic, and high status products

Decoration - wall and space enhancement

Wearable Products - low and high fashion aesthetics

art as a networking/communication system

The extension and propagation art products

Entertainment Oriented (Art that is performed or created by and for artists and to engage the general public)

Web based communications (portals, web sites, e-mail art)

Promotions and Advertising (print, time-based and electronic)

art as a reproductive system

The ability of the system to produce products that seem like they could be mass manufactured, but are actually hand-made, unique, or editioned

Reproduction (Art that is made based on the process of editioning and the replication of ideas)

our DESIGN VISION

All our products are:

Unique, hand made, or editioned

Based on esoteric yogic, Hindu, and Buddhist aesthetics

Designed to work towards 100% incorporation of the principles fair trade, fair wage, and organics

Guestbook

Sign the guestbook

Sign the Guestbook | Administration

Sunday, 26. November 2006 02:01 PM
Thank you for stopping by my site. Here you can leave your mark.

Guestbook Go

Total Records: **17** Records Viewed Per Page: **10**

Next Page

Name	Comments
17) **o** Location: -	**Thursday, 19. October 2006 01:13 PM** o
16) **Maureen L** Location: -	**Monday, 9. October 2006 08:36 PM** Part II The provocative nature of the show relates, I think, to the way it activated contradictory impulses. And, rather than trying to reconcile them, Samsara Unlimited let these opposing forces work themselves out in each individual's experience of the evening. A retail setting activates consumerist impulses and social relations that are normally at odds with the philanthropic impulse to help suffering humanity and the spiritual pull to transcend Samsara altogether. This creates a sense of vertigo: consumerist desires are enacted and the question is, am I contributing to the problem or the solution, or both simultaneously? The lack of a pat answer reflects the reality of life as a middle-class North American embedded firmly in capitalist society. Samsara Unlimited also gestures at the possibility that, at least during temporary interventions, capitalist forms and processes can be torqued to produce different outcomes. At least temporarily, the project is producing real effects for a group of children in Zimbabwe.
15) **Maureen L** Location: -	**Monday, 9. October 2006 08:35 PM** Part I I love the idea of transforming the art exhibit into a tool for social change. Many activist cultural productions take place outside the gallery because the "white box" is not seen as a really effective site for activating social justice concerns. However, Pravin managed to find a way to do just that, while creating a controversial, thought-provoking and materially successful show. By materially successful, I'm referring to the fact that the funds raised for the Zimbabwe project were well over the initial goal.
14) **the sandwitch** Location: -	**Sunday, 24. September 2006 05:44 AM** hello carrie gates, unfourtunately, your assumptions on my "opinion" being one of observing this installation/intervention at it's early stage, is incorrect. the snelgrove gallery was attended on thursday, a day before the opening. the opening would have beeen delightful to attend, to experience, but i could not attend. of course i've read the online statement. that is how i found this guestbook and re-visited because of being so unsettled with my dissapointment in this exhibition. in fact, the entire website content was read including press releases and artist statements, in hopes to improve my impressions of this MFA project. i would not have opened my big yap if what i had to say was not soundly educated. it is OK to have critique of work, even more so than praise. ask mr.pillay, a clearly educated man, himself. once again, the conceptual end of samsara is excellent, just badly executed, in my own humble opinion. thank you for championing the cause of samsara, i'm sure it was appreciated by many.
13) **R. Mutt (part1)** Location: -	**Friday, 22. September 2006 07:37 PM** Congratulations. You've all started a business. And you should be proud Mr. Pillay, very few people receive two MBA's in their lifetime. Do not be mistaken, this is clearly all you have accomplished here. For you may have made a business, but it is quite apparent that art has no business with you. Of course there is room for this in the artworld, but its on the icky side of the artworld with other things that were famous for being bad ideas. Let's face it, this is about as thought provoking and fullfilling as a trip to McDonalds. Despite what slogans you butter me, "the smart consumer" up with - I'm most assuredly not "lovin' it".
12) **R. Mutt (part 2)** Location: -	**Friday, 22. September 2006 07:37 PM** Like many businesses, you have decided to make contributions towards a good cause. Many people will support you for this, and you will sadly think that it is because you have talent. I am here to help you. I am here to tell you that you have no artistic talent. I am here to tell you that in your efforts to contribute compassion towards a good cause, you are very much contributing towards the destruction and descent of another. Who will fight for this cause? Who will donate these fighting words towards it? I will. For your disrespect is written all over the dollar store content that is Samsara Unimited. So please stop dragging something as beautiful and free as Art into what you have done.
11) **R. Mutt (part 3)** Location: -	**Friday, 22. September 2006 07:36 PM** I'd feel better about donating to your cause if you simply collected door to door. The products manufactured locally are poorly made and there is nothing you carry that I could not find in another store or make myself in the span of an hour. If you claim to have compassion, then why have you put so little effort and so little thought into the "art" on display?
10) **R. Mutt (part 4)** Location: -	**Friday, 22. September 2006 07:34 PM** Please stop referring to these items as art. Apart from an ability to advertise, and basic hand eye coordination, you clearly lack talent and vision. People defending this kind of work need to get out more, and maybe ask themselves what they are missing in their lives that even the discussion generated by this garbage might fill. I should remind some of you that discussion about a project does not automatically make it successful either. I am only here now because someone needs to stop fanning your little behinds, and tell you that what you are doing is disgraceful, and for whatever cause you think you are leading people towards, it is undeniably your own. Now please do everyone a favor and quitely be forgotten. Filipp: **Ameriquest Mortage - trouble with new mortgage** Filipp: **Ameriquest Mortage - trouble with new mortgage** Den: prescription-tramadol -
9) **Carrie Gates** otherartists(at)gmail (dot)com Location: -	**Friday, 22. September 2006 03:40 PM** Here is a link to my thoughts on samsara Unlimited: http://homepage.usask.ca/~cdg118/samsara-cdg.html I'm writing from home...I'm too sick to come to the opening tonight (arg!), but I really wanted to participate in some way, so please read my comments through the link above and let me know what what you think. ~carrie
8) **Twyla** entirely(at)gmail(dot) com Location: -	**Friday, 22. September 2006 01:32 PM** I was incredibly impressed by this project. I am a BFA student, and I'm definitely looking forward to my final exhibition so I can do something as amazing and elaborate as you have. The responses by people I've talked to and such have been interesting. I love the focus on the religiousity of consumerism. Finally, I think it's always a great thing when people can participate in the show. I found a shirt that I liked in your exhibit and I'm buying it - proof that I too am a consumer hack, and in fact I'm not ashamed of it - I'm a typical North American. I appreciate that I can waste ånd make little effort to curb it. I enjoy shopping, I enjoy the capitalist society in which we live because I'm a middle class white citizen. But that doesn't mean I don't think about it or consider it. Overall, the show was very interesting and I appreciated it for being thought provoking.