

no. 9

Contemporary Art & the Environment

No. 9's Art and Ecology Educational Program

IAIN BAXTER & ECOARTVAN

Getting Ready for the IAIN BAXTER & ECOARTVAN ...

TEACHER'S GUIDE

Part One: IAIN BAXTER &, An Introduction to his Art and Ideas

Part Two: Stewardship: Animals and Animal Habitat

Part Three: Eco-Action

Part Four: *We Are Here & ...*

Next ...

Part Five: Professional Development Afternoon For Teachers at the Art Gallery of Ontario (March 23rd)

Part Six: *Model Schools for Inner Cities* School Visits:
IAIN BAXTER & ECOARTVAN Studio Workshops with No. 9 Art Educators (April/May)

Part Seven: School-wide Group Exhibition at the AGO:
Green Sweepers' Wall of Eco-Art (Evening June 9th)



Getting Ready for the IAIN BAXTER& ECOARTVAN...

USING THIS GUIDE:

Part One: IAIN BAXTER&, An Introduction to his Art and Ideas:

This section is designed to encourage students to think creatively, to take risks and to be actively engaged in multiple ways:

- Art images as minds-on and springboards into action;
- Trigger questions for deep thinking and brainstorming;
- Graphic organizers to jot answers and ideas for individual reflections and guided small group/class discussions;
- Art-making ideas for consolidation of their learning.

The next two parts form the foundation for understanding Iain Baxter&'s art and art as ecoactivism. They add depth to the ideas of stewardship in ways that can be transferred to students' actions and their art-making.

Part Two: Stewardship: Animals and Animal Habitat:

This section is designed to deepen understanding about one selected animal, its adaptations, its habitat/community and the important relationships among them; to understand and value stewardship; and to become an animal steward in ways that will transfer into eco-action.

Includes:

- Graphic organizers for animal research with space for jot answers and a scientific illustration of their animal;
- Graphic organizers guiding the study of habitat and community (This is based on the *Life Systems* strand of the Grade 4 Science Curriculum: Animals and Habitat.)

Part Three: Eco-Action:

This section is designed to encourage deep thinking about actions we can take to help conserve and protect animal habitat – as individuals and as a community of students.

- Graphic organizer for class “Nine Eco-Actions”.

Part Four: We Are Here & ...

This section contains more images and ideas about the work of IAIN BAXTER& that can be used for class discussions, enrichment and for other extensions.

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Images on first page: IAIN BAXTER&, *Skewered*, 2005, Stuffed animals and stainless steel 12 foot pole.
IAIN BAXTER&, *Lake*, 1994, Acrylic on canvas, cement patio stones and bikes. 10 feet high by 15 feet wide.
IAIN BAXTER&. *ACT: Long Arrow, Washington State*. 1969. Chromogenic print.

IAIN BAXTER& ECOARTVAN

Part One: IAIN BAXTER&, Canada's Foremost Conceptual Artist



IAIN BAXTER&

Photo: University of Windsor

“It’s all about three words: wonder, play, love.”

Thinking About Art: Conceptual Art

Conceptual art is art about ideas.

What is art? Conceptual art often questions what is traditionally considered as art.

Make a quick list of some of the things around you. What things do you consider to be art? What are your reasons? Compare your list with others in your class. Keep your list and see how it changes by the end of the project.

Item	Art/Not Art/Maybe	Reasons

Reflection: *If you put any of these things together in unexpected combinations would that make them art?*

Playing With Words

“Art Is All Over”

*What possible meanings could this saying have?
Can it mean more than one thing at the same time?
Jot down your ideas and discuss them.*



(1971) Button created by N.E. Thing Company, an art company under which IAIN BAXTER& made work from 1966 – 1978.

What's In A Name?

IAIN BAXTER& legally added the & (ampersand), meaning “and”, into his name as another letter.
Why do you think IAIN BAXTER& added “and” to the end of his name? Jot down your ideas and discuss them.



IAIN BAXTER& has created work under other names during his career, including the anonymous name of IT and later (1966 – 1978), the art corporation called the **N.E. Thing Company** under which he had various departments (photography, painting, projects, publishing, multimedia, etc.). N.E. Thing Company made a huge range of works, even stamping some with a gold foil seal of approval.

As you can probably tell already IAIN BAXTER& loves to play with words and ideas! He says

“Slam words together and you get a new concept.”

Please remember as we go through this project, that in looking at art and associated ideas, there are many possible meanings and interpretations to a given artwork. Nothing is “wrong”! After your initial response you should try to communicate what leads you to think or feel a certain way about an artwork. Think some more and add some more ideas or even change your mind!

Have fun!

Being Contradictory

IAIN BAXTER& plays with **contrast** and **contradictions** as a way to get us to pay attention – to experience **wonder** about the world around us.



Still Life With Winter Vista, 1996. Cibachrome (kind of photograph) transparency on a light box. (Collection of the artist through Corkin Gallery, Toronto.)

1. What are some of the **contrasts** and **opposites** that Iain Baxter& is playing with in "Still Life With Winter Vista"? (Think of elements of design, temperature, juxtaposition, viewpoint, emotions, etc.)

2. What other questions or ideas come to mind when you look at this artwork? What environmental issues does it raise?

3. What could have happened before this moment?

4. What might happen next? Could you create a story?

Animal Preserve No. 2 (1999)

An installation with over 500 preservation jars containing stuffed animals pickled in distilled water.
(Collection of the National Gallery of Canada, Ottawa.)



We have seen how IAIN BAXTER likes to play with words. What could “preserve” mean in the context of this work?

Investigating the Meanings of “Preserve”		
Tense	Definitions	Synonyms
As a noun	1. _____ _____	_____
	2. _____ _____	_____
	3. _____ _____	_____
As a verb	1. _____ _____	_____
	2. _____ _____	_____
	3. _____ _____	_____



Let your mind flow freely
!!!!



1. What about IAIN BAXTER&'s **Animal Preserve** made you laugh or smile? Why?

2. What about **Animal Preserve** made you think seriously? What did you think about?

3. Did any part of **Animal Preserve** remind you of anything? What did it make you think of?

4. Did any part of **Animal Preserve** bring back memories about anything? Describe them.

Share Your Thoughts, Ideas and Stories



CO₂ Landscape, 1990. Installation View. Iain Baxter& has used many materials to make this work including a large thermometer, artificial plants, paint and a fake, glowing fireplace in the bottom corner. (Collection of the University of Lethbridge, Alberta.)

“Wonder. Play. Love.”

This motto of IAIN BAXTER& that leads to engaging art, also brings us to the idea of **environmental stewardship**.

Stewardship, loving and caring for the environment is interwoven with having a sense of wonder about the environment and a desire to play – to explore and learn about the world around you.

In the following sections we will research animals and their habitats, investigate the environmental concerns and human impact affecting the health of these habitats, and develop a set of actions that we can take or encourage others to take to help conserve animal habitats for the animals’ and our future.



Television Works, 2003 – 2006. Installation View at Corkin Gallery, Toronto. (Collection of the Art Gallery of Ontario, Toronto.) In this installation IAIN BAXTER& has painted the screens of discarded television sets. During the installation, the televisions are turned on so that the flickering screens run behind the painted landscapes.

What surprises you about these artworks? What do these works say to you about environmental issues?

Consolidations: Playing with Art and Ideas

Have fun with these art projects that can be used as quick inspirational activities or expanded into longer exploratory endeavors.

1. Word Play:

How many words can you make with the letters in the word “ampersand”? In pairs or small groups record as many words as you can make in 3 to 4 minutes.

2. “Slam words together and you get a new concept”:

Materials: Discarded magazines. Scissors. Glue. Paper. Additional materials if available: Markers, pencil crayons, paint, etc.

Work in small groups. Each student selects and cuts out four or five words and puts them into a container. When all the words are collected and mixed together students take turns each picking out two or three words at random. Each student plays with their words, putting them together to create a new concept/idea/thing. Share the ideas.

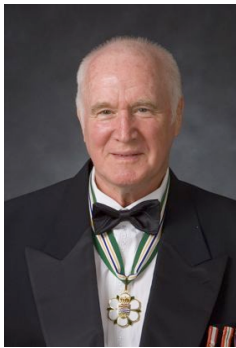
Students can make more new word slams, glue them onto their paper and respond with line, colour and shape using whatever materials are on hand to create an expressive mixed media collage.

IAIN BAXTER& is inspired by and likes to inspire others by the words of Marshall McLuhan, “our great Canadian global philosopher”. McLuhan says,

“One of the functions of the artist that is understood in recent decades is that it is, above all, to prevent us from becoming adjusted to our environments. The job of the artist is to upset all the senses and thus provide new vision and new powers of adjusting to and relating to new situations.”

IAIN BAXTER&

Now that you have studied some of IAIN BAXTER&'s art and ideas you are probably curious about his life, his influences and inspirations.



Iain Baxter& and the Order of British Colombia.

IAIN BAXTER& is a great Canadian artist and teacher. The depth and breadth of IAIN BAXTER&'s art-making practice, his innovations and his far-reaching impact on society and his fellow artists has been praised and acknowledged by many.



He has been awarded some of Canada's highest honours: he is an Officer of the Order of Canada; he has received the Order of British Columbia and the Order of Ontario, the Queen's Golden Jubilee Medal and the Alberta Government's Achievement Award for Excellence. He is the 2004 winner of the Governor General's Award in Visual and Media Arts and has an Honorary Doctorate from the Universities of British Columbia, Simon Fraser and Windsor. He has been awarded the Canada Council Molson Prize for the Arts and the Gershon Iskowitz Prize -- both for Lifetime Achievement. All these and many more!

As well as being a maker of thought-provoking and award-winning art, IAIN BAXTER& is a gifted teacher. He studied education at the University of Idaho earning a Masters Degree in 1962. Since 1988 he has taught at the University of Windsor in the School of Visual Arts and from 1966-71 at Simon Fraser University in British Columbia. He has also taught children at summer art recreation programs and teachers in summer programs through the University of British Columbia. He is a dedicated, generous and inspiring teacher.

His first studies weren't in education or even art, but in Biology and Zoology. He sees a close relationship between art and science including and beyond the illustrations of animals and documentary photography he did that led him to the study of art. His studies in art began formally in 1961 in Japan when the Japanese Government awarded him a scholarship to study fine arts and aesthetic theory for a year. Upon his return he continued in this direction, enrolling in a Masters of Fine Arts program at Washington State University. His commitment to the study of life carries over into the themes that he explores in his wide-ranging art practice.

IAIN BAXTER& is also deeply impacted by Zen. He writes in his artist statement: "Another early source of inspiration for me has been the Eastern philosophy of Zen, which I studied in 1961-62 in Japan and has been important to my life and my art. It teaches the importance of living in the moment, of caring for the environment, of the interconnectedness of all living things, and of being aware of your own and the world's present state of being."

For early on in his career, the ideas and theories of Canada's "great global philosopher", Marshall McLuhan have deeply affected IAIN BAXTER& and have been incorporated into much of his work. IAIN BAXTER& explains how the ideas of Marshall McLuhan, "profoundly affect our way of looking at the modern world. We live in a natural landscape and a landscape of information and it is the fusion vs. the confusion between these landscapes that excites me and informs my practice."

The works of IAIN BAXTER& have been exhibited and collected by people and institutions around the world: from France, Holland and the United States of America to the National Gallery of Canada, the Art Gallery of Ontario and other of our public galleries across the country. IAIN BAXTER& is represented by the Corkin Gallery, Toronto.



Pile of Ands, 2008. Installation View: Corkin Gallery, Toronto.

And...

Coming in 2011 at the AGO* and the SAM!**
A major 50-year retrospective of IAIN BAXTER&'s pioneering and innovative work.

Keep your eyes open and your minds on!

*Art Gallery of Ontario, Toronto. **Seattle Art Museum, Seattle, Washington State, USA.

For more about IAIN BAXTER&'s work visit: www.ccca.ca (Centre for Contemporary Canadian Art) and www.voxphoto.com.



Part Two:

STEWARDSHIP: Animals and Animal Habitat

You will be researching the adaptations and habitat of one of the following animal species from the WWF- Canada's Symbolic Wildlife Adoption Program.

Each of these animal species is at risk and your job will be to research the animal, to find out why the animal is at risk and to determine what can be done to conserve and protect their habitat. Once you know what you can do – do it, set a good example and tell others so that they can help as well.

Through WWF- Canada's generous donation you will each be adopting one of these animal species! You will receive a cuddly toy animal, a small reusable bag and a report that tells of some of the conservation work that symbolic adoption supports!

You will receive a list of the animals that have been given to your class to adopt. Please ensure that each animal donated gets adopted and has a student steward! Your research and the cuddly animal will become incorporated into the artwork that you will make when the IAIN BAXTER& ECOARTVAN arrives with the No. 9 Artist Educators.



Arctic Fox



Asian Elephant



Leopard Frog



Blue Shark



Caribou



Cod



Monarch Butterfly



Snow Leopard



Grizzly Bear



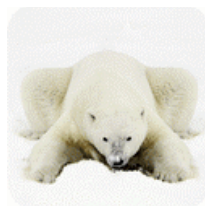
Orangutan



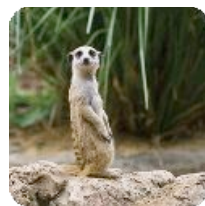
Common Loon



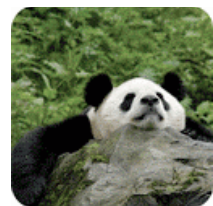
Emperor Penguin



Polar Bear



Meerkat

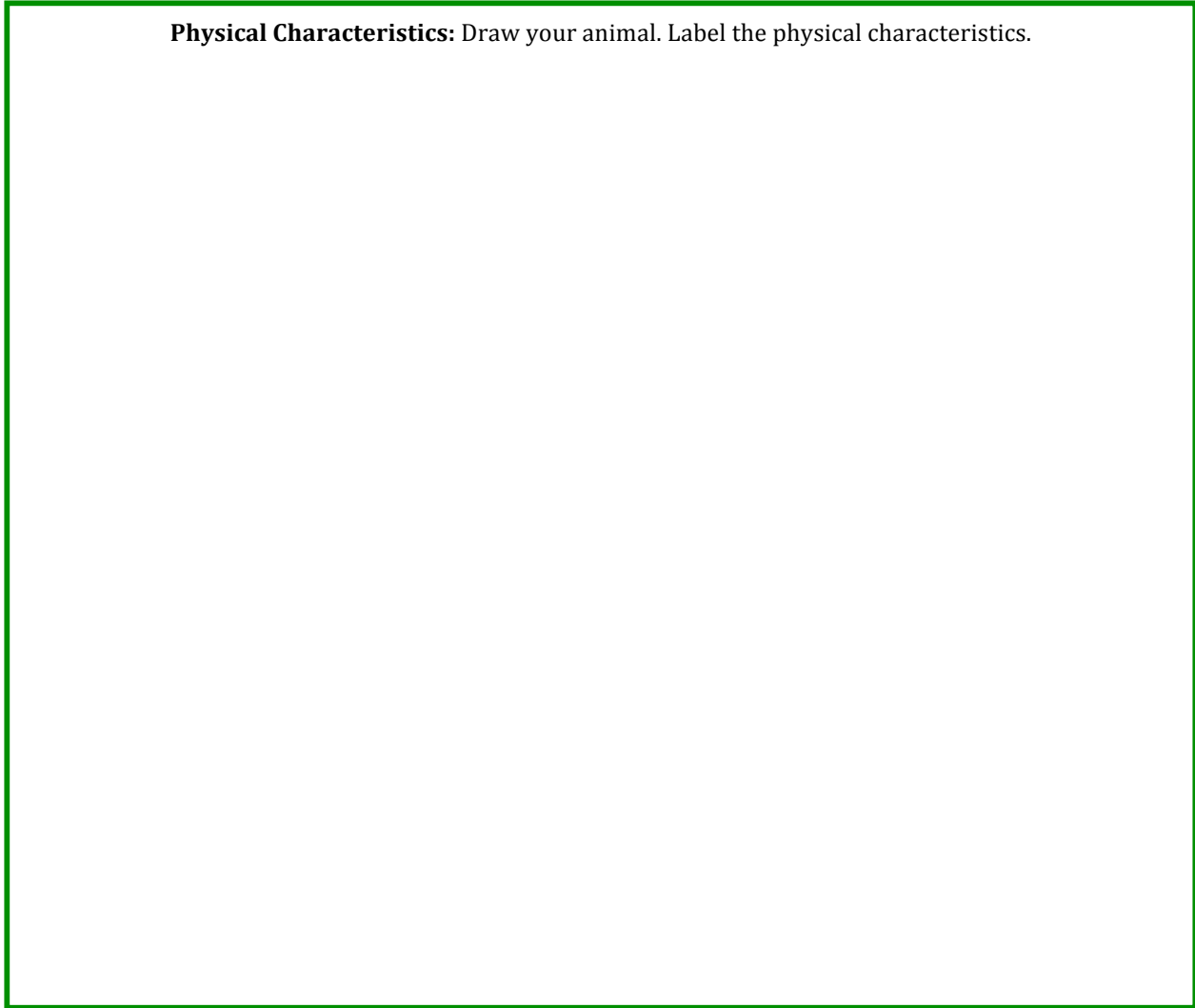


Giant Panda

Animal Adaptations and Habitat Investigations:

Animal: _____

Physical Characteristics: Draw your animal. Label the physical characteristics.



Fill in the chart below:

DIET	
FOODS	ANIMAL'S ADAPTATIVE PHYSICAL AND BEHAVIOURAL CHARACTERISTICS

Habitat Name: _____

Show the **geographic range** of your animal by colouring the appropriate areas on map below:



Fill in the charts below.

ABIOTIC (Non-living) FACTORS	DESCRIPTION and Effect on Habitat	ANIMAL'S ADAPTATIVE PHYSICAL AND BEHAVIOURAL CHARACTERISTICS
Climate:		
Seasons		
Sunlight		
Temperature Range		
Humidity		
Precipitation		
Water		
Wind		

ABIOTIC FACTORS (Cont'd)	DESCRIPTION and Effect on Habitat	ANIMAL'S ADAPTATIVE PHYSICAL AND BEHAVIOURAL CHARACTERISTICS
Soil		
Geology of the Land		
Land Use		

List and describe the biotic factors in the charts below. Include illustrations. Use another page if necessary.

BIOTIC (LIVING) FACTORS: Plants		
Name	Description	Drawing

BIOTIC FACTORS: Other Animals

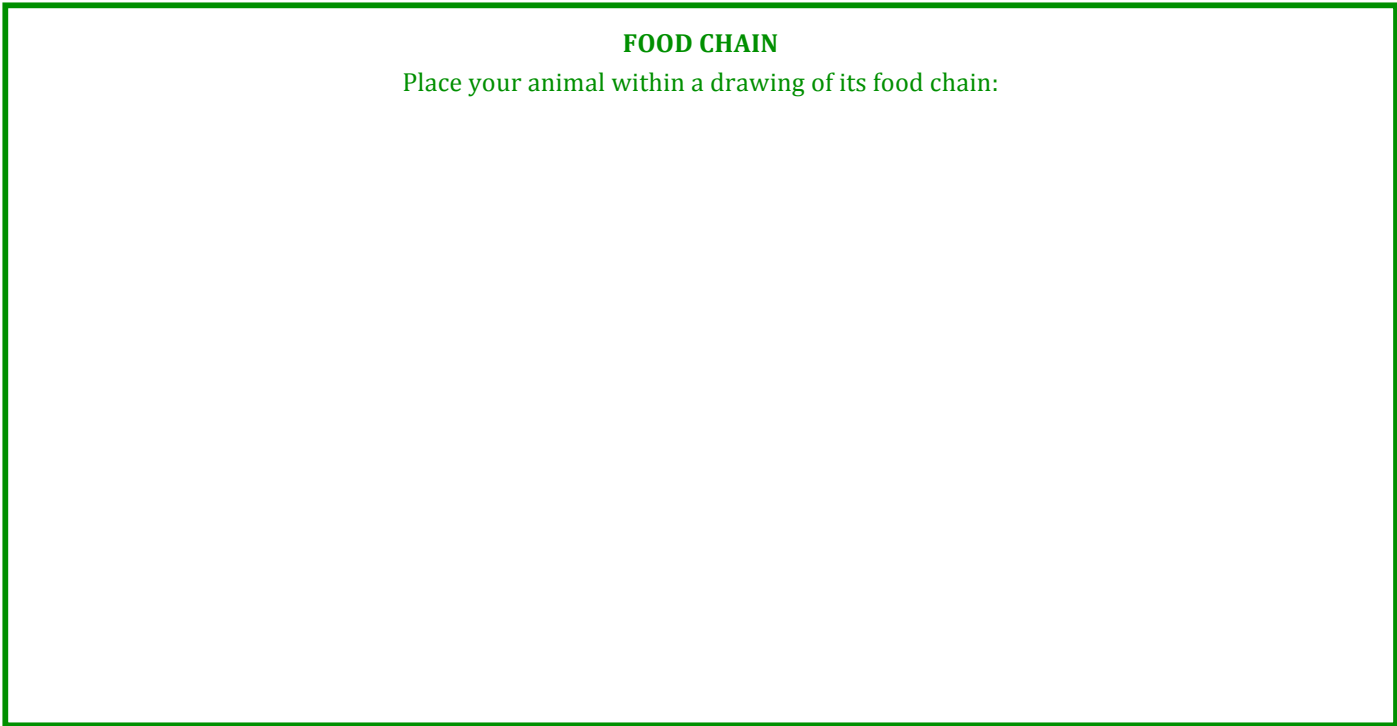
Name	Description	Drawing

Pictures Of My Animal's Habitat

Make a collection of pictures showing your animal's habitat. Do some sketches. You will use these and the other sketches you have done of plants and animals to make your final artwork when the **IAIN BAXTER & ECOARTVAN** and No. 9 Artist Educators visit your school.

FOOD CHAIN

Place your animal within a drawing of its food chain:



Fill in the chart below:

HUMAN IMPACT ON HABITAT

Five ways in which humans impact your animal's habitat:	Five corresponding things that you can do, or encourage others to do, to help conserve or restore the habitat:
1. _____ _____	1. _____ _____
2. _____ _____	2. _____ _____
3. _____ _____	3. _____ _____
4. _____ _____	4. _____ _____
5. _____ _____	5. _____ _____

Part Three:
ECO-ACTION

Share your list of five things that you can do, or encourage others to do, to conserve animal habitat with your class. Compile your lists, discuss and create an overall list of nine actions that you can do, or encourage others to do, to help restore and conserve animal habitat. Some can be specific and others more general.

Do all of these actions! Keep a record on this sheet. *

Class _____

School _____

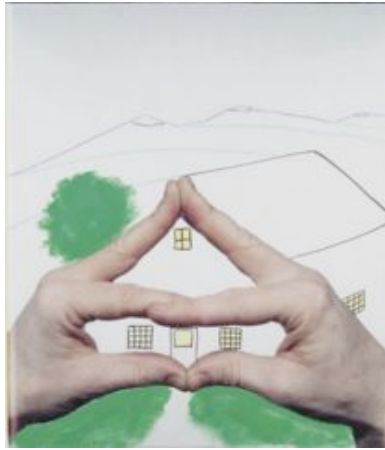
NINE ECO-ACTIONS

No.	Action Taken √	ECO-ACTION
1.		
2.		
3.		
4.		
5.		
6.		
7.		
8.		
9.		

* As encouragement, the No. 9: Contemporary Art and the Environment's educators will bring you a special button to acknowledge your eco-activism when the **IAIN BAXTER & ECOARTVAN** arrives.



President of N.E. Thing Co. Inclining to think.



Handwork- house with tree & mountain



Handwork - still life with red flowers

“IAIN BAXTER& has always made art about the environment. How we picture our landscape determines how we use our land. His art and photographs make us aware of who we are and how we fit into the cycle of life. For BAXTER& art is a system - a way of seeing that makes us think. His art shows us that we have a role to play. For him there is no difference between the natural world and ourselves: we are one interconnected body. That is the meaning of AND in his name -- it connects the artist to the world, art & nature. &... “

Dr. David Moos, Curator of Contemporary Art, Art Gallery of Ontario



IAIN BAXTER&'s Tattooed Hand

Further information about the images of IAIN BAXTER&'s work on pages 16 and 17:

N.E. Thing Co. *¼ Mile Landscape* 1968 (assembled 1981)

Hand-tinted silver prints, printed map, watercolour and graphite on paper

© Art Gallery of Ontario, Toronto.



The photograph shown on page 16, with its “Stop Viewing” sign, is placed in the middle of a set of three photographs as part of the *N.E. Thing Co. ¼ Mile Landscape* shown above. A printed and collaged-upon map, on which is indicated the route of this ¼ mile in Newport, California, is placed off to the side. Each of the photographs shows the view from the truck window – and in each, a different sign that had been placed along route by N.E. Thing Co. is visible.

***Trophy*, 1994**

Plywood, paint, stuffed animals, mirror, clock.

Collection of the Art Gallery of Alberta, Edmonton.

Each painted plywood section and its stuffed animal head is a separate piece that when hung together like a puzzle forms the ten-foot diameter globe.

A mirror, on which is written, “We are here”, replaces one of the pieces. Time, as well as place is evoked as IAIN BAXTER& has placed a clock on the mirror, a reminder of the urgency with which we must act to address environmental problems.

Trophy looks like a sphere, but it is not! IAIN BAXTER& has created an optical illusion. Except for the animal heads sticking up above the surface of each section, the work is entirely flat!

IAIN BAXTER&, President of N. E. Thing Co. *Inclining to Think*, 1969.

Hand-printed black and white photograph.

The print has been affixed with a gold N.E. Thing Co. seal.



Handwork – still life with red flowers* and *Handwork – house with tree & mountains

1980. Chromogenic 24 inch Polaroid, done with a large, special Polaroid camera, with oil and felt-tip marker drawing.



IAIN BAXTER & ECOARTVAN, April/May 2010
(Artist's Early Rendition)

9 no.

Contemporary Art & the Environment

No. 9's Art and Ecology Educational Program Guide:

IAIN BAXTER & ECOARTVAN



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