



LA CASA DEL TUNEL ART CENTER
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ENGLISH

Press Release

**“The Candy Store” (La dulcería): Dispensing Truth
October 13, 2009**

An installation created by Artist/Collaborators, **Debby and Larry Kline**
For **La Casa Del Túnel: Art Center**, a new cultural center in Tijuana that
formerly housed a smuggling tunnel.

Exhibition opening on Saturday, October 24, 2009 at 7PM (PST)

Refreshments and music at “**la terraza cafeEcoverde**”

Round table Discussion Saturday, November 7, 4:00 PM. (The discussion
will include the artists, a pharmacist, a physician and an advocate for medical
marijuana)

Smuggling or snuggling? Anything goes in “**The Candy Store**” (*La dulcería*):, an installation that simultaneously attracts and repels viewers, exposes the inherent conflicts in the international healthcare industry, and the legalities and illegalities in the world of pharmaceuticals. The Candy Store is a retail space that houses "inconsumable products" made out of controlled substances (e.g. tobacco Teddy bears and Vioxx ceramic candies) adding meaningful visual spectacle and humor to the dialogue surrounding healthcare issues and bridging boundaries between art, science, sociology and activism. It continues what **Warhol** began by blurring the lines between art and commodity and builds on the notion of **Claes Oldenburg's** store (1961) with the addition of a socially conscious message that can effect political change.

The pharmaceutical/health care industry system in America is dysfunctional. While large segments of the population go without access, the privileged are over-medicated, sometimes relying on pharmaceuticals as treatment for conditions once held as normal variations in personality and temperament. Those without medical access must seek alternative methods, crossing the borders of Mexico or Canada in search of affordable drugs. Many on fixed incomes must choose between life-saving medications or food, shelter and clothing.

Americans are led to believe that pharmaceuticals in the US are superior to those made in neighboring countries. The unfortunate truth is that the US has removed many medicines from the market that were supposedly tested for safety and efficacy.

“The Candy Store” (*La dulcería*): addresses this trend toward self-medication by allowing consumers to purchase inconsumable objects (talismans or placebos) made of their medications of choice. As viewers become participants, each draws on their own experiences in the quest to remain healthy and productive. Viewers will also identify with the quick fix society, the irony of talismans made of ceramic and medicine, placebos as metaphors and tobacco toys designed to entice young patrons. Many of the medicinal ingredients are based on the artists’ own experiences. **Larry** was prescribed two medications which were released for consumption and later found to be unsafe and sadly, **Debby's** brother died from abusing prescribed drugs that were easily available and purchased through the internet. The addiction occurred as a result of his back surgery and pain medicine that was initially ordered for him by his physician. Unfortunately, these family tragedies are reflective of larger societal ills. Consider school children medicated to conform to acceptable standards who will likely find it difficult to cope without drugs/medication later in life.

The venue at **La Casa Del Túnel: Art Center** is an apropos location considering the hordes of US citizens who cross the border to save money on less expensive prescription medications. The added facet of a drug-smuggling tunnel transformed into a cultural venue transformed into a drug store makes the project even more significant, meaningful, timely and edgy.

Saturday, November 7, 4:00 PM. A roundtable discussion will address the questions raised by the exhibition. The discussion will include the artists, a pharmacist, a physician and an advocate for medical marijuana. The discussion is free and open to all members of the bi-national community.

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The Candy Store will feature some of the latest works by The Klins including **Toxic Cocktails**.

Toxic Cocktails is comprised of dozens of bone-like bisque ceramic angel-topped swizzle sticks assembled in the form of a human skeleton, resembling an archaeological or forensic study. Each angel has been inscribed with the name of one of over twenty medications, selected by the artists at random, that have been recently removed from the market. The medications are as follows:

In 2001, Bayer voluntarily removed Baycol from the market. The drug was intended to lower cholesterol and prevent heart disease. It was found in some cases to cause a fatal form of rhabdomyolysis.

Bextra was approved for use by the FDA in 2001, and used widely to relieve pain associated with arthritis. It was later found to cause life threatening skin conditions and cardiovascular problems.

Duract is an anti-inflammatory drug used for the short-term treatment of acute pain. The FDA approved the drug in 1997, followed by reports of the drug causing liver failure in patients who used the drug for longer than 10 days.

The FDA recently issued a safety warning on the Duragesic patch, citing improper use may cause breathing difficulties and death. A manufacturing problem left some of the patches with a cut in the internal reservoir lining. Contact with a defective pain patch may deliver a dose of fentanyl which can lead to breathing problems or overdose.

In 2004, the FDA banned all substances using Ephedra. Evidence has shown that the compound is only effective for short-term weight loss but it can be responsible for an increase in blood pressure, strokes and heart disease.

Millions of prescriptions were written for the weight loss drug Fen-Phen. It has since been recalled after producing serious side effects including permanent health damage and death. American Home Products, the creators of Fen-Phen, have been accused of intentionally hiding the risks of the drug prior to the recall.

In 2000 Glaxo-Smith-Kline nearly discontinued the production of Lotromex following reports of severe stomach and intestinal disorders which often required surgery, caused discomfort and in extreme cases, death.

Palladone was pulled from the market after just 5 months. Palladone provided severe pain relief over a 24 hour period but was particularly dangerous when taken with alcohol. Alcohol disturbs Palladone's extended relief system causing some users to overdose in order to relieve pain.

In 2007, The FDA announced that the distributors and manufacturers of Pergolide removed the drug from the market because of the potential for heart valve damage.

Pondimin is linked with primary pulmonary hypertension and heart valve damage. Heart valve damage is of a particular danger because the symptoms can go unnoticed for long periods of time. Prior to the recall of Pondimin testing showed 30 percent of users showed some form of heart valve damage.

Posicor effectively reduced hypertension but was found to produce dangerously low heart rates when combined with over 25 different drugs.

In 2000, the FDA recalled Propulsid, a drug designed to treat severe heartburn. While effective against heartburn it was linked with 80 deaths and hundreds of cases of irregular heart rhythms.

Raxar was given FDA approval in August 1997 and recalled two months later. Raxar was intended to treat infections ranging from pneumonia to sexually transmitted diseases. It was quickly linked to serious side effects including death.

Redux was designed to combat obesity but was later linked to serious heart conditions. It was commonly used in a combination with other drugs to form dexfen-phen. On their own, the drugs were considered safe, but no tests were run to examine the effects of combining the drugs.

Rezulin was shown to be associated with liver disease. With two other type 2 diabetes medications available, the FDA asked that Rezulin be taken off of the market.

Seldane, an allergy medicine, was linked with irregular heart beats and proven potentially fatal when mixed with other medications.

After three patients developed serious side effects, Tysabri was removed from the open market, a controversial decision as many multiple sclerosis sufferers are hoping for its return.

In 2005 the FDA issued a request to the manufacturer of Vioxx, asking that they recall the drug due to evidence that it was responsible for an increased risk of heart attack and stroke.

Data revealed a significant increase in potentially fatal heart incidents among users of Zelnorm/Zelmac. The FDA asked Novartis to suspend marketing and sales of Zelnorm while it reevaluates the drug's risk/benefit profile.

In 2008 Digitek tablets were recalled after being found to contain twice the approved level of digoxin. The double-strength pills posed a risk of digitalis toxicity, nausea, vomiting, low blood pressure, cardiac instability and death.

In 2009, the FDA warned dieters and body builders to immediately stop using Hydroxycut, a widely sold supplement linked to cases of serious liver damage. The warning was delayed because the FDA has no authority to review supplements before they're marketed.

In 1998, Roche announced Posicor's withdrawal. Before it was removed from the market, Posicor caused multiple injuries and may be responsible for as many as 143 deaths.

Baxter Healthcare Corp., has been accused of deliberately substituting ingredients in its anti-coagulant heparin with a dangerous counterfeit to maximize profits. The tainted Heparin was distributed to the U.S., where hundreds of allergic reactions occurred causing more than 80 deaths and hundreds of illnesses before the drug was recalled.