

'Shapes for Hamilton'

Community-wide cultural event celebrates labor of artist Allan McCollum

By Margo Frink

(Hamilton, NY) Each resident in the town of Hamilton will have the opportunity to take part in a cultural event entitled "Shapes for Hamilton." Artist Allan McCollum has never taken on a project of this scale before but plans to create a unique shape for each resident living in the town of Hamilton, said associate Professor DeWitt Godfrey. The shapes will be on display at the Clifford Gallery at Colgate University and then each resident will have the opportunity to pick a one-of-a-kind shape at different distribution centers in the community. There will be no charge for the shapes.



The process of creating these shapes is complex, Godfrey said. Over the past several years McCollum has designed a system to produce a series of unique, two-dimensional "shapes," enough for every person on the planet. It allows him to keep precise track of the shapes, so as to insure that no two will ever be alike, that no two people will ever share the same shape.

Godfrey attended the Jan. 12 Hamilton Village Board meeting to ask for possible distribution sites, explain the project and seek help compiling a database on residents. No personal data, addresses or contact information will be compiled, Godfrey said.

"This is not a Colgate event but a town wide event," Godfrey said. "[McCollum] insists we don't distribute the shapes on campus."

Mayor Sue McVaugh suggested the high school as a possible distribution site.

The Poolville Community Center has already been designated as one distribution site.

Godfrey explained that McCollum produces the shapes. They will then be catalogued and brought together for a brief exhibition at the Clifford Gallery from March 8 to 31. And then sometime in early April the distribution will begin.

Town residents can come and receive their shape, which will be signed by McCollum. It's all voluntary and no residents will be solicited or contacted directly.

There will be a lecture and presentation at Colgate's Golden Auditorium on Feb. 3 at 4:30 p.m.

McCollum was born in California in 1944 and lives and works in New York. He has spent more than 30 years exploring how objects achieve public and personal meaning in a world constituted in mass production, focusing mostly on collaborations with small community historical society museums in different parts of the world.

Godfrey is associate professor of art and history and the director of the Institute for the Creative and Performing Arts at Colgate University.

Margo Frink is managing editor for M3P Media LLC. She can be reached at 315-481-8732 or 315-363-4254.