



Eric
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Watermelon pickle

EDITOR'S NOTE: Eric Gerber has donated his usual space to reprint this article by Craig Leghorn, who writes the column "Culture 'n' Stuff" for *The Hard Times*, company newsletter of Dunder Bros. Concrete in Alvin.

My motto is Art Is Where You Find It, and if that means a fella's gotta take a machete, a pair of hip waders and a bottle of Cutter Insect Repellent to go see some, well, so be it. You want an easy job, go work for the Post Office.

The art of which I'm reviewing today is the outdoor art show called the Watermelon Flats Show. And no, Watermelon Flats is *not* some ol' blues singer.

What Watermelon Flats is, is a place. In downtown. Houston. You know where the big new Wortham Theater Center is? Well, right next to the Wortham Theater where the Buffalo Bayou runs under the overpasses. Or is that over the underpasses? Anyway, around where the bayou goes through — uh, through here where the bayou goes around? What I mean is, across from where that theater is next to the streets which are above where the art is beneath . . . jeez, trying to give directions is such a confusing preposition.

OK, look. It's located downtown near that new park they're constricting along the bayou called the Seska . . . uh, Seqsu . . . Sesquinsent . . . aw, hell. Just find it, OK?

Anyway, you'll know when you get there because there's art — surprise! — sitting on the bayou banks, art hanging from the overpasses, art in the trees, art in the bushes. Just coming up on all this stuff outside in an *al fresco* situation, as it were, will probably remind you of what the famous dead critic John Ruskin once said, "Boy, will you just *look* at all this stuff?"

Why is it here? Ah, the internal question. Why is anything anywhere? Because somebody put it there, that's why! In this instant, some local Houston artists of this city just wanted to put some art there. It's their way of saying, "Hey, let's put some art there." After all, from a hysterical prospective, the very first art

that our ancestors *homo genized* man created was probably outdoors along a bayou much like this, wasn't it? Actually, no. It was inside some French caves at Les Tremayne. But so what, right? Is the glass half-empty or half-full? Exactly!

Ready to go? Not so fast! Four-armed is four-armed! The Watermelon Flats art expedition isn't for everyone! For one thing, the mosquitoes along the bayou have been known to carry away children and family pets up to 50 pounds. Also, a machete to hack through the more lush exhibit areas is a good idea. (The critic from *ArtForum* magazine was using a gas-powered weed whacker, the sissy boy.) A sturdy pair of snake-proof hip waders is also *de rigorous* for sloshing along the friendly currents of the Buffaloed Bayou.

If there ever were any ID tags on these sculptors, the winos have pawned them for bottles of Mad Dog 20/20. So you have to make up your own titles. Here's a big silver jogger with one leg busting through a stool and one arm a mechanical wing. Let's call it *Running Man*. Oops. *Woman* — you can tell by the breasts. All nine of them. Mother dog!

Over there's just this big ol' head hanging in the thin air on cables. Oh, I get it: *Head in the Clouds*, right? And look at this, somebody went and *buried* a see-through plexiglass case with *another* head in it. Hmm. *Head in the Sand*? Spooky stuff. Some old falling-down drunk is gonna find himself face-to-face with that thing and run screaming all the way to Conroe.

Somebody created a cactus, with a woodpecker, a steer and a pickup decorating it. There's a whole soup kitchen's worth of rusty bedsprings. Couple of big wire balls. Some ropes hanging down with shoes, bird cages and such-like attached to them. Here's a plastic sack with several items spilling out into kind of an intriguing arrangement. It's interesting, but — oops, hold it. That's just a busted trash bag. Or maybe it's a work of art that's supposed to *look* like a busted trash bag. Funny. I know everything about garbage, but I don't know what I like.