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Ice Books

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An "ice book" filled with local seeds is set to be launched into the Great Miami River next week as part of an eco artist's residency at the University of Dayton.

"I take blocks of ice and hand carve them into the form of a book, which to me is a very interesting sculptural metaphor for learning and for things that we can know about our environment," said Basia Irland in an interview with Cincinnati artist Susan Byrnes (listen to the interview at the related link). Irland is an eco artist who will return to Dayton for a weeklong residency Sept. 10-14

as the first installment in the University of Dayton Arts Series.

In preparation for the sculptures, Irland meets with local botanists, plant specialists and community members to determine the best seeds — typically from endangered plant species — to include in the ice book.

"These seeds are embedded into the books, so the seeds themselves form a kind of text," she said. "I think of it as a kind of international ecological language. It is a language of the land, of that particular site."

She calls the ice book project "receding/reseeding" because it links the receding of the world's glaciers to the seeds from local plants meant to restore local waterways.

The highlight of Irland's visit will be a public ice book launch at **4 p.m. Friday, Sept. 14, at the Vietnam Veterans Memorial Park near the Stewart Street Bridge**, preceded by a bike parade beginning at ArtStreet on campus and ending at the bridge. A public reception and lecture is also planned Thursday evening at the University of Dayton.

Visit the new Arts website at the related link for more information about the event.

The University of Dayton and Antioch College brought the New Mexico artist to town in mid August. At that time she learned about the region's waterways, met with River Stewards, faculty and community members with an interest in environmental sustainability and demonstrated her unique art of making ice books.

Irland plans to participate in several events during her residency. The following events are free and open to the public:

"Water Works" exhibit: on display now through Sunday, Sept. 16, in ArtStreet Studio D Gallery.

Artist reception: 6 p.m. Thursday, Sept. 13, ArtStreet Studio D

Lecture: 7 p.m. Thursday, Sept. 13, McGinnis Center

Ice Book Launch: 4 p.m. Friday, Sept. 14, Stewart Street Bridge

Irland plans to return to the area to continue her residency March 1-3 in Glen Helen Nature Preserve in Yellow Springs. She will work again with students from the University of Dayton and Antioch College, as well as other interested community members.

Irland has the honorary title of faculty scholar at the University of New Mexico and has received grants and awards from the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Research Foundation. She has also been a Fulbright senior research fellow and a Woodrow Wilson fellow.

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