

## *Gleaning the Rains*

J.J. McCracken & Margaret Boozer/Red Dirt Studio—  
Catalogue Brewing/Patrick McDonough & Kenny George

Performance artist and local resident J.J. McCracken collaborates with **Red Dirt Studio's Margaret Boozer** to address site-specific/local and broader issues of stormwater management with their project, *Gleaning the Rains*. Together with **Catalogue Brewing's Patrick McDonough & Kenny George**, plus a team of students and interns, McCracken and Boozer transform a hitch trailer into a mobile rainwater collection unit for the market site.

The unit doubles as a kiosk, or information locus, as it harvests rain to water onsite artists' projects in the following ways:

- Open-source design may be copied by any homeowner in the region interested in installing rain barrels
- Unit distributes information on tax incentives and rebates for homeowners who adopt water management practices for reducing stormwater runoff on their properties
- Unit houses workshops by artists involved in the market site throughout the season

Built of lumber, common roofing materials, gutters and rain barrels, *Gleaning the Rains* is a mock-up of any average single-family-home roof in the neighborhood. It serves as an easily copied model while intending to spark dialog about stormwater management among Gateway residents. Collected rainwater may be used to water gardens and trees or to wash cars, etc., reducing the amount of money a homeowner spends on a water bill while decreasing the negative effects of stormwater runoff on the Chesapeake Bay and other regional water bodies.



*Gleaning the Rains*, 2014; image © J.J. McCracken, courtesy CONNERSMITH

# Gleaning the Rains

Artist Bio—



**Gleaning the Rains** is a syndicate of creative professionals and organizations focused on earth-friendly people-problem solving. Its membership is flexible and its designs open-source.

Past projects include

- *Waiting for Rain*, a rain observation installation/ritual built at VisArts in Rockville, Maryland (2012) by a team led by Margaret Boozer/Red Dirt Studio and J.J. McCracken
- *Renting the Rain*, a coin-operated shower fed by a rainwater catchment system built in the woods of Maine to reflect the battle between civic associations across the state and Nestle Waters North America, bottling as Poland Spring  
*Renting the Rain* was designed by J.J. McCracken in collaboration with Margaret Boozer/Red Dirt Studio and Erwin Timmers/The Washington Glass School, and built by a team of assistants led by the trio  
The project was commissioned by the Watershed Center for the Ceramic Arts in Newcastle, Maine, for its 25<sup>th</sup> Year Anniversary Symposium on art and culture (2012)
- Continued research on stormwater management, funded by a grant from the Puffin Foundation (2011-present)

The **Gleaning the Rains** rainwater harvesting kiosk was commissioned by the Gateway Community Development Corporation (Brentwood, MD) with support from Art Lives Here for the **Route 1 Farmers Market & Bazaar** (2014)

The project was designed and built by

- J.J. McCracken
- Margaret Boozer/Red Dirt Studio
- Patrick McDonough & Kenny George/Catalog Brewing
- With support from a team of assistants, interns and students, including Sean Lundgren, Travis Wagner, Lorenzo Cardim, and Sarah Fitzsimmons

Special thanks to Red Dirt Studio (Mt. Rainier, MD; [margaretboozer.com](http://margaretboozer.com)) for general support, and for in-kind donations (materials) to Built-Up Roofing Systems (Wells Avenue, Mt. Rainier, MD; [builtup.net](http://builtup.net)), The Roof Center (Rhode Island Avenue, North Brentwood, MD; [roofcenter.com](http://roofcenter.com)), and Community Forklift (Edmonston, MD; [communityforklift.org](http://communityforklift.org)). **Gleaning the Rains** is committed to buying local; where materials have been purchased, we buy from the above-listed suppliers and from People's Supply (Hyattsville, MD; [peoplessupply.com](http://peoplessupply.com)), Ferguson Enterprises, Inc. plumbing supply (Washington, DC; [www.ferguson.com/branch/washington-dc-plumbing](http://www.ferguson.com/branch/washington-dc-plumbing)), and James T. Warring Sons, Inc. for rain barrels (Capitol Heights, MD; [warringbarrels.com](http://warringbarrels.com)).

Catalog Brewing may be found at [catalogbrewing.com](http://catalogbrewing.com)

Contact **Gleaning the Rains** directly here: [gleaningtherains@gmail.com](mailto:gleaningtherains@gmail.com)





*Thirst, and the Martyr*, by J.J. McCracken; photo: Margaret Boozer, © J.J. McCracken, courtesy CONNERSMITH

## Artist Bio: J.J. McCracken

Focusing on the Living Experience—making & consuming, loss, the passage of time—J.J. McCracken constructs immersive installations. McCracken’s landscapes are composed of earth materials and activated by sound, smell, taste, and living models that move through them, focused on tasks they’ve been assigned. Sometimes, repeating cycles of productive activity yield accumulation—and then things fall apart. Other times, consumption is incessant but drones on, unable to satisfy.

Recent performances include *“the still point,”* performed in Nancy Holt’s *Dark Star Park* (Rosslyn, Virginia; 2013). *“the still point”* was commissioned by the SuperNOVA International Performance Art Festival as a headlining work. The piece, a 24-hour endurance performance, reads Holt’s park through the lens of T.S. Eliot’s *4 Quartets*.

*Hunger*, an older project spanning several years (2008-2011), used geophagy (earth-eating) as a launching point for an experiential poem about need. During the exhibition, *Hunger, Philadelphia*, clay-covered models moved through an arid, monochromatic landscape eating clay casts of fruits and vegetables. The excessive consumption of a visually bountiful but non-nutritive food substitute was central to the main idea of the project.

J.J. McCracken received a B.A. in Anthropology from The College of William and Mary in 1995, an M.F.A. in Studio Art from The George Washington University in 2005, and attended the Skowhegan School of Painting and Sculpture in 2012. McCracken is the recipient of numerous awards and grants, recently including a Maryland State Arts Council Individual Artist Award in Sculpture (2014), a Louis Comfort Tiffany Foundation Award (2011), and two grants from the Puffin Foundation (2013 and 2011).

McCracken’s work has also been acknowledged through awards, grants, and fellowships from the Chenven Foundation, the D.C. Commission on the Arts and Humanities, and the Harpo Foundation. Among other older awards, her *STASIS* project received “Best In Show” in the *Ceramic Objects/Conceptual Material* exhibition during the “Crafting Content” symposium at the University of Arkansas, Fayetteville.

J.J. McCracken is represented by **CONNERSMITH** in Washington, DC, teaches at the Corcoran School of Art, and is currently building large-scale projects with the generous support of a position as Artist-In-Residence at Margaret Boozer’s Red Dirt Studio in Mt. Rainier, Maryland.

[www.JJMcCracken.com](http://www.JJMcCracken.com)



*photo by Nicholas LaClair*

## **Artist Bio: Margaret Boozer**

b. 1966 Anniston, AL

Margaret Boozer lives and works in the Washington, DC metro area. She received a BFA in sculpture from Auburn University and an MFA in ceramics from New York State College of Ceramics at Alfred University. Her work is included in the collection of the Smithsonian American Art Museum, The Museum of the City of New York, The US Department of State, The Wilson Building Public Art collection and in many private collections. Boozer taught for ten years at the Corcoran College of Art and Design before founding Red Dirt Studio in Mt. Rainier, MD where she directs a ceramics and sculpture seminar.

Recent projects include a commissioned installation at the US Embassy in Djibouti and writing a chapter for the U.S. Geologic Survey's **Soil and Culture**. Recent exhibitions include **Swept Away: Dust, Ashes and Dirt** at the Museum of Arts and Design in New York. In addition to receiving an Individual Artist Award in Sculpture from the Maryland State Arts Council, she is especially proud of receiving the 2012 **Arts Excellence Award** from the Prince Georges Arts & Humanities Council at their inaugural Arts Gala Awards.

**[www.MargaretBoozer.com](http://www.MargaretBoozer.com)**