



# FUNDRED

## Dollar Bill Project

**Mary Rubin**

**W**hat is a sculpture? What materials and tools do artists work with? What is conceptual art? Why is art important? These are the questions we ask students as an introduction to the Fundred Dollar Bill Project, *Safehouse*, and Operation Paydirt.

The Fundred Dollar Bill Project is an innovative artwork made of millions of drawings.

This creative collective action is intended to support Operation Paydirt, an extraordinary art/science project uniting three million children with educators, scientists, healthcare professionals, designers, urban planners, engineers, and artists. Together they are working to make safe the lead-polluted soil of New Orleans, which places thousands of children at risk for severe learning disabilities and behavioral problems.

### **Safehouse**

The Fundred Dollar Bill Project and *Safehouse*, an eye-catching, iconic

sculpture located in the middle of a New Orleans neighborhood, are the brainchild of artist Mel Chin. He transformed an entire house into a sculpture with a ten-foot diameter vault door that swings open. Inside, more than 6,000 funded dollar bills, (hand-drawn, original interpretations of U.S. one hundred dollar bills), cover the walls of *Safehouse*.

*Safehouse* frames each child's

artwork as a precious object that represents the value of the individual creative voice. This art is about the environment, and this artist is working

within the ideas and artwork of millions of people to invite us into the creative process. One of the lessons of *Safehouse* is that we can all contribute collectively and make a difference.

### **The Fundred Dollar Bill Project**

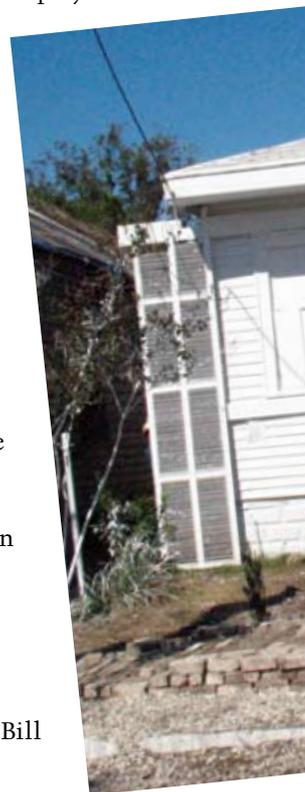
The goal of the Fundred Dollar Bill Project is the creation and collection of three million artworks by children across the United States that will be delivered to Washington, DC to raise

awareness and funding to heal the environmental impact of years of pollution compromising environmental health in New Orleans and other cities. Once the project reaches its goal of three million artworks, a specially retrofitted armored truck powered by vegetable oil will be deployed across the nation to pick up the 7,000 pounds of funded dollar drawings.

The art currency will be delivered to Washington, DC, and there we will request from Congress an "even exchange" of three million funded dollar bills for three million dollars in funds and services to support Operation Paydirt.

### **Fan the Fundred Flames**

The initial phase of the Fundred Dollar Bill





Project is a simple and fun classroom project. Each student is given one blank fundred dollar bill to create his or her own unique artwork to donate to the project. Through the simple gesture of creating fundred dollar bills, people nationwide can take part in this far-reaching project supporting the rebuilding of New Orleans.

Ultimately, the success of the project depends on our collective efforts. We invite you to create awareness of your global community in an easy one-day lesson or integrate artistic, social, or scientific concepts into a comprehensive unit. Mail completed fundred dollars to a collection center near you before the end of 2009 so all fundreds are counted!

Go to [fundred.org](http://fundred.org) to download:

- Fundred Dollar Bill lesson plans and color template
- videos and a comprehensive PowerPoint presentation with script
- map listing of centers across the nation.

*Mary Rubin is the national coordinator for Operation Paydirt: New Orleans.*

**WEB LINK**

[www.fundred.org](http://www.fundred.org)



Go to [schoolartsonline.com](http://schoolartsonline.com) to download your own fundred dollar bill template.

*Safehouse is a powerful sculptural icon of Operation Paydirt in New Orleans' flood-wrecked and lead-laden neighborhood of St. Roch. The house was transformed into a bank vault by conceptual artist Mel Chin. The interior walls are lined with thousands of New Orleans created fundreds. Photo: Amanda Wiles.*



**Operation Paydirt**

New Orleans is one of the most lead-polluted cities in the United States with an estimated 86,000 properties recording dangerously high levels of lead. Lead poisoning can cause cognitive damage and behavioral issues and has been linked to the loss of IQ points, higher rates of behavioral and attention problems, and reading disabilities.

Although the use of lead is now limited, residual contamination from gasoline and paint is present in soil and continues to compromise health in many cities. Post-Katrina rebuilding efforts include searching for a solution to this condition. Operation Paydirt is working to develop and apply a scientific method to render lead pollution harmless in the soils of New Orleans. The estimated cost for Operation Paydirt is \$300,000,000.

*Bundles of fundreds ready to be sent to a collection center.*