

## Gallery Paule Anglim

### Wayne Zebzda

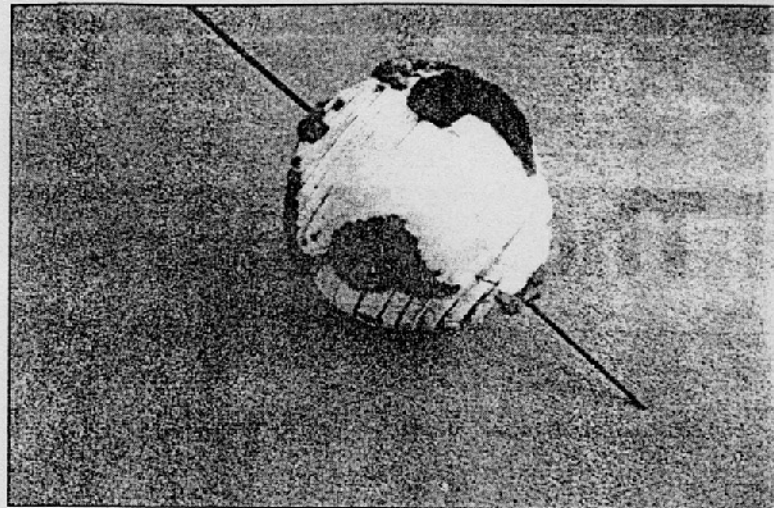
Through July 27 at Gallery Paule Anglim, 14 Geary St., San Francisco.

Making use of environmental objects, coal, wood, charcoal and paper, Wayne Zebzda explores the complex relationship between the environmental movement and commercialism. The corporate sector is now embracing the political hot potato of the decade—the destruction of the environment. Even McDonald's is on the bandwagon. But Zebzda's images address the ecological travesty that awaits the forests and natural habitats, for, without urgent action, disaster seems inevitable. Ironically, many of those concerned corporations also share in the responsibility for the situation at hand.

Zebzda is no stranger to environmental issues, having scavenged South of Market in San Francisco for previous installations, and he has never been one for either subtlety or compromise. Here, however, he examines the split between esthetics and environmentalism—esthetics which often call for the use of the same resources that artists are seeking to protect or preserve. From this broad, mediated level, the extinction of the species and natural resources are reworked in a manner that is free of insularity and dogma. Even the artist has his hand in the tug-of-war between the abuse of the environment and the preservation of our heritage.

Environmentalists from Earth First! were bombed just one year ago in the surreal setting of suburban traffic in the East Bay. Earth First! became infamous for fighting the timber industry—battling with the loggers themselves. This was carried out in its own surreal setting—the lush redwood forests north of San Francisco. Gallery Paule Anglim takes on some of that same surreal energy in this installation. But Zebzda also brings a quality of realism into the incipient commercialization of the environmental movement. This is tomorrow's catchword; Greenpeace calls it “eco-pornography.”

Earth Day has now become a media circus for corporations who do more for corporate communications than environmental action. In Zebzda's wry imagery, the tragedy of extinction seems almost as inevitable as the dodoes and dinosaurs before us. His observations on the interrelationship of art and action emerge from *Macy's of Muir Woods*. Perhaps his moose antler coatrack should take pride of place in Judi Bari's living room, as the audacious contrast of demoralized animal parts are transformed into kitsch decoration.



Wayne Zebzda, *The World is a Fuzzy Place*, 1990, wood, fur and steel 18" dia., at Gallery Paule Anglim, San Francisco.

Oddly enough, they do not shock or repel. Rather, they describe the quirky relationship between commercialization and preservation. Zebzda points out that this need not be symbiotic or even destructive; his pieces somehow imply harmony, and this engaging quality makes these mixed-media pieces so attractive. Perhaps the most provocative work is *The World is a Fuzzy Place*, in which Zebzda suggests that planetary extinction accompanies the annihilation of animals. Rather than a desperate call to environmental action, Zebzda's work dissects the price of extremism on both sides—resources will always be consumed in a manner that will deplete the earth. What is the price of exhausting the earth's resources? How much should an art lover pay for an animal's liberty? The result is a deeper appreciation of the issues that seem to consume the 1990s. Perhaps the salvation of the planet can be settled before natural resources become something we can only imagine.

—Mary Dowd