

# Gallery 1

April 28 - July 8, 2007

In collaboration with the Empty Bottle (Chicago), the artist and the Art Center has orchestrated an exciting schedule of diverse musical genres that will be performed from inside and outside of the speaker sculpture. During moments when no performance is scheduled, visitors are allowed to enter the sculpture and investigate sounds of their own. Special ticketed performances by touring bands are marked with the ticket price. Visit [www.emptybottle.com](http://www.emptybottle.com) to purchase tickets for these four concerts in advance.

May	June
Saturday, May 5	Saturday, June 2
12-1pm, Cola Wars	12-1pm, The Kinzie House
3-4pm, Empty Bottle presents Neil Jendon	1-2pm, Unlucky Atlas
	2-3pm, David Fischhoff
	3-4pm, Empty Bottle presents Plastic Crimewave Vision
Thursday, May 10	Celestial Guitarkestra
5-6pm, Jacob Christopher	
	Sunday, June 3
Friday, May 11	3-4pm, Empty Bottle presents Zelenople
8pm, Empty Bottle presents Waterbabies, Voltage, small MVP (\$8)	
	Saturday, June 9
Saturday, May 12	2-3pm, LeMonster
2-3pm, Slings & Arrows	3-4pm, Empty Bottle presents Estesombelo
3-4pm, Empty Bottle presents Carol Genetti & The Locks	
4-5pm, All Smiles	Sunday, June 10
	2-3pm, Mykel Boyd
Sunday, May 13	3-4pm, Empty Bottle presents Vertonen
3-4pm, Empty Bottle presents Pillars & Tongues	
	Friday, June 15
Wednesday, May 16	8pm, Empty Bottle presents Plastic Little (\$8)
6-8pm, Hardstreet Inc. Records	
	Saturday, June 16
Saturday, May 19	3-4pm, The AstraL-teRRa Trapeze Unit
3-4pm, Empty Bottle presents Tirra Lirra	
	Sunday, June 17
Sunday, May 27	3-4pm, SpiresThat In The Sunset Rise
3-4pm, Empty Bottle presents Berman/Reed/Roebke Trio	



## Speaker Project by Juan Angel Chávez



*Speaker Project*, 2007, found materials,  
10 x 16 x 25 feet

### Hyde ParkARTCENTER

**5020 South Cornell Avenue Chicago, Illinois 60615 773.324.5520 [www.hydeparkart.org](http://www.hydeparkart.org)**  
The Hyde Park Art Center is a not-for-profit organization that presents innovative exhibitions, primarily work by Chicago-area artists, and educational programs in the visual arts for children and adults of diverse backgrounds. The Center is funded in part by the Alphawood Foundation; The Chicago Community Trust, a City Arts III grant from the City of Chicago's Department of Cultural Affairs and the Illinois Arts Council; The Gaylord and Dorothy Donnelley Foundation; The Lucius and Eva Eastman Foundation; The Field Foundation of Illinois; Lloyd A. Fry Foundation; The Leo S. Guthman Fund; The Illinois Arts Council, a state agency; The Joyce Foundation; The Mayer & Morris Kaplan Family Foundation; Kraft Foods; The MacArthur Foundation; The MacArthur Fund for Arts and Culture at Prince; The National Endowment for the Arts; Polk Bros. Foundation; The Clinton Family Fund; South East Chicago Commission; and The Andy Warhol Foundation for the Visual Arts; and the generosity of its members and friends.

An expert craftsman, salvager, urban cowboy, joker, mix master, and mad scientist, the multifaceted character of Juan Angel Chávez is deeply engrained and apparent in all of his artwork and public projects. Speaker Project is no exception. The title reaffirms the artist's intent to construct a large stereo-speaker form that also enhances or alters any sound produced inside. The befitting term “project” indicates that this is not only a physical object meant to project or throw sound, but most important, the artwork is an ongoing program of activity and experimentation. Included in the program is the audience – all considered curious musicians regardless of skill - invited to bring instruments to play in the box, or play the materials used to build the box. Speaker Project combines art forms of collage, sculpture, installation and performance all in one and is the largest scrap material artwork ever made by the Mexican born artist. Ever since 2005, when the project was first proposed to the Art Center, the driving question for Chávez has been in two parts: How can sound be made visible? And does visual art effect what we hear?

Juan Angel Chávez has mentioned that the streets and alleys of the Chicago land area serve as an excellent supply closet and storage unit for his art. Driving by manufacturing yards, abandon houses and city lots in his pick- up truck, he notes where to find certain materials when the time comes and he needs that specific texture, color, size or shape to construct his canvas. The more run-over, worn, deteriorated, or dated the item is the better. Similar to a nice green patina on a bronze sculpture, Chávez is attracted to the richness of experience that these materials display. Yet, he is not nostalgic for these materials, only appreciative of their bumps and bruises that make them visually original and irreproducible. Although the new item is too shallow and has no life, it is the only material the artist trusts to serve as the structural frame. Over thirty different items can be identified and many we can only assume what they are for (Chávez can always tell you what it is). These items were chosen by the artist to provide a sensory smorgasbord of patterns, smells, textures, sounds. Consisting of a plethora of found material we see everyday, such as “for sale” signs, wood panel siding, book shelves, and orange traffic cones, to name just a few, the large-scale sculpture appropriates the discarded and “borrowed” city materials, investing in them an aesthetic value and purpose that they never had before.

The architecture of the speaker-modeled rectangle sculpture includes six unique planes designed by Chávez with certain functions. Every wall is full of various sized peep holes allowing stolen views between interior and exterior, while simulating the look and feel of a child's club house. Three of the walls imitate traditional types of stereo speakers or megaphones. The north wall is a concave cone made from paper with a small aperture flowing into the sculpture, similar to an antique phonograph horn. The cone on the south wall has a much larger opening and is attached to the structure of the sculpture through a flesh colored latex rubber allowing it to bounce, as an amplifier does when bass is played loudly. The east wall consists entirely of traffic cones resembling a large grid of cheerleaders' megaphones shouting into the sculpture and directly channel or muffle the speaker sound outward. The cones are perfectly shaped to fit the human ear, drawing listeners close. Chávez refers to the west wall as the “mechanical wall”, in which he has embedded different kinds of industrial materials, including PVC pipes, glass flasks, and sheet metal, which can be used as instruments. The upper part of this wall intentionally appears to be broken or blown out. It dramatically guides the eyes up to the visually captivating roof top full of magnifying lenses and Plexiglas paus-

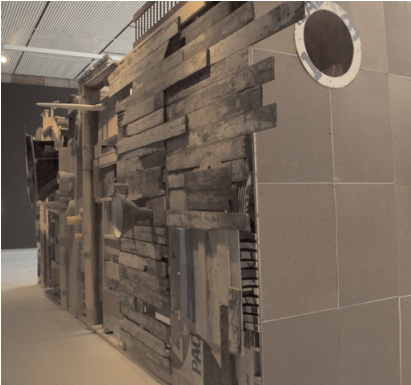
es that direct the atmospheric light or video projection (depending on the time of day) illuminating the space. Not to be overlooked, the last plane is the foundation of the sculpture, which seats a couple of stages made from recycled artwork crates to allow musicians inside to move up or down and physically change the direction of sound.

The idea of Speaker Project originated from the artist's longstanding fascination for fantasy architecture, as demonstrated by trained and untrained artists and architects including Antoni Gaudi (Park Guell, Barcelona), Niki De Saint Phalle (Tarot Garden, Tuscany), and Simon Rodin (Watts Towers, Los Angeles). In 2005, Chávez built his first large scale fantasy sculpture called La Esperanza for a group show that took place at Open End Space (Chicago). La Esperanza was four feet tall by seventeen feet long and ten feet wide and made in the shape of a shipwrecked pirate's boat. Through a fortuitous turn of events, the sculpture ended up being used as a stage on top of which music bands performed. This prompted the artist to make a maquette, or structural model, for Speaker Project, a sculpture that would work in collaboration with the performers.

Juan Angel Chávez attributes his sensibility of found objects to his upbringing in La Junta, a town close to the border just south of Texas, where Música Norteña (Mexican polka) plays freely and no object or packaging goes to waste because resourcefulness is as plentiful as refuse. Immigrating to the city of Chicago in 1985, Chávez encountered an abundance of urban materials, not only objects, but also new cultures that he took part in, such as skateboarding and mixing records as a DJ. He has collaborated on numerous public art sculptures

and murals around the city. His artwork has been exhibited in Chicago as well as Copenhagen, Denmark, and many other national locations. Having studied at the School of the Art Institute in Chicago and receiving first-hand pointers from his father, a skilled carpenter, Chávez is able to create his own hybrid language used to examine and activate the relationship between art, music, and the public.

Allison Peters  
Director of Exhibitions



Installation view of west wall



Installation view of south wall

Special thanks to Peter Creig Toalson and the Empty Bottle, Chris Hammes, Philip Nadasdy, George Petersen and all of the musicians that have donated their time for this project.