

1. Compost kitchen



Do-it-yourself composting is typically a messy affair best left to those blessed with considerable acreage and an aptitude for gardening. Environmentally conscious city dwellers are in luck, however, as Naturemill has introduced a small, odor-free composting machine for processing organic household waste. A self-contained mixing system heats and aerates the refuse, creating perfect fertilizer for your potted plants. Though electrically powered, the system uses only 10 watts of energy and although designed for the kitchen, is equally at home in a garage or on a patio.

The entire Naturemill system is available online for \$399

www.naturemill.com

2. Muji awards creativity

Beginning May 15, beloved Japanese brand Muji will be accepting entries for their international design competition. Proponents of sustainable, creative design solutions, Muji has long been the leader in producing inexpensive, thoughtfully

rendered furniture, stationery, travel accessories, and more. This competition challenges designers to construct objects specifically for a room's perimeter that are in keeping with Muji's traditions of sleek concepts and original material incorporation. The competition is open to entries until August 31st after which time the winner will take home the helpful sum of \$20,000.



www.muji.net/award/eng_essentials.html

3. Spray it on



Spray-on-tanning's recent popularity notwithstanding, the spray-on product genre (spray-on hair for men?) has a dubious pedigree. Thus, Fabrican, which claims simply to be "spray-on cotton fabric," has been met with some understandable skepticism. The London-based company was founded by Dr. Manel Torres and Professor Paul Luckham, of London's Royal College of Art and Imperial College, London, respectively. Their website touts Fabrican's proposed uses, encompassing not only fashion-specific applications, but also medical, automotive, and airline innovations.

The thickness of the material is buildable: initially very thin, but with variable textures, from "soft as silk" to "tough as hemp." While currently unavailable for sale, Fabrican is looking for collaborators to distribute and manufacture their unique product. Perhaps a sponsorship from one of the couture houses is on their horizon?

www.fabricanltd.com/index.htm

4. Steaming streets



A clever bit of guerilla marketing is making headlines around New York: Folgers coffee employed advertising agency Saatchi & Saatchi to position their product at the customer's feet. Literally. The innovative campaign features vinyl stickers printed with lifelike photos of Folgers coffee which are stuck on top of steaming manhole covers around town. In a city where excessive coffee consumption is already a way of life, the campaign encourages more of us to choose Folgers over the ubiquitous Starbucks.

www.coloribus.com/blog/?p=158

5. 2006 Modern Marvels Invention Challenge



This year, the History Channel has partnered with the National Inventors Hall of Fame® Foundation to create a competition for ordinary citizens to present their inventions and win grant money to pursue production of their designs. Presentations of twenty-five semi-finalists' creations will air from May 24 through 27 at 10PM and will feature such concepts as an all-terrain wheelchair (pictured) and a wearable motherboard equipped to monitor vital signs. Various prizes include the top award of \$25,000.

www.historychannel.com/invent

6. The world on your finger



Jewelry designer Christine J. Brandt has garnered abundant press in New York this Spring thanks to her work's inclusion in up-and-coming fashion designer (and CFDA nominee) Doo Ri's Fall 2006 runway show. A well-traveled childhood included stops in Japan, Spain and Norway, among other countries, and has informed her work with a profound sense of the natural world. The wood or metal base of each of her hand-crafted necklaces and rings is constructed around the original shape of the stone. Brandt eschews sanding or refining so as not to alter the raw appearance of her found materials. Stones range from black tourmaline to Herkimer diamonds which she gathers at national mineral shows or receives in surprise packages from friends around the world.

www.christinejbrandt.com

7. Picture global warming



British design company Blacksmoke Organization has issued a rallying cry to artists concerned about global warming. Participants in the Danger Global Warming Project submit photographs that in some way incorporate a roll of Greenpeace's "Danger Global Warming" tape wrapped around something that plays a role in climate change. The overall quality of results posted to Blacksmoke's website thus far has varied, though the lot includes entries from an eclectic assortment of celebrities like Philippe Starck, Siouxsie Sioux and Traci Lords. Rolls of the Greenpeace tape are available on the Blacksmoke website, and the gallery is open to all who wish to contribute.

www.blacksmoke.org/gallery/albums.php

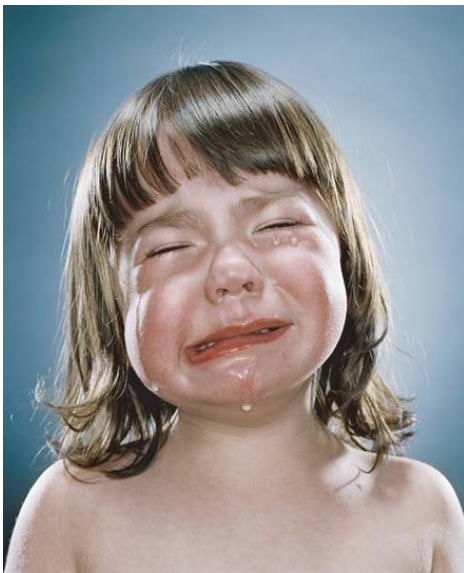
8. The next step in wallpaper



Artist Susan Bradley has taken the recent fervor for wallpaper outside the home. Her often baroque, repeated designs are fashioned from sturdy materials like stainless steel, perspex and acrylic, which can affix to any flat vertical surface, indoors or out. The applications are endless, from the entire sides of nondescript brick buildings to decorative additions to balcony railings and garden walls. The fastenings allow for vegetation to grow up through the design as well as for the accumulation of more panels or combinations of different designs.

www.susanbradley.co.uk

9. End times



Photographer and RISD graduate Jill Greenberg's new series of photos at the Paul Kopeikin Gallery in Los Angeles takes an interesting look at the current U.S. administration through glowing, deeply affecting portraits of children in distress. With clever titles like "Nuclear" (sic), "Torture" (pictured), and "The Rapture", she seeks to reveal not only the prevailing ideology of our government, but also its theologically-inspired *raison d'être*. Commenting on this state of affairs via images of our youngest citizens in pain, which would be disturbing in and of themselves, she emphasizes immediate national traumas in an interesting, and touching, way.

www.paulkopeikingallery.com/index.htm
Through July 8th 2006 in Los Angeles

10. Sonic bling



Milan-based Mac@Work has expanded the sphere of status symbols from handbags, jewelry and cars to include its custom iPod headphones, dubbed "iDiamonds". Featuring diamonds and white gold mountings, the *haute tech* earbuds are exclusively available online for between 660 and 750 Euros. Conceivably, those who can afford this indulgence won't be riding the subway, where telltale white cords are already a signal to muggers and pickpockets.

www.macatwork.net/luxurymac/index.html

11. AdiColor animation



As covered in the March 2006 NYC Trend report, the Adidas AdiColor project has been gathering steam, sponsoring everything from sneaker exhibits to in-store artist appearances. Now, the AdiColor podcasts invite artists to create short, animated or live-action videos based on the colors available for their customizable sneakers (white, red, blue, yellow, green, pink and black). The recent submission at left by Roman Coppola, tells the story of "what the world was like before and after the color red came to be." The Red video and links to the other colors at:

www.coolhunting.com/archives/2006/05/adicolor_red.php

12. Tillmans stateside



The work of German photographer Wolfgang Tillmans can vacillate between the realistically stark and the simply beautiful. From almost bleak portraits of young men and women to found landscapes, Tillmans has been a major force in photography for years but has never had a U.S. show. On May 20, the Museum of Contemporary Art in Chicago brings 300 of his photos, plus video and installation work, to the Midwest.

Through August 13, 2006
www.mcachicago.org

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