



Exhibition Spotlight: Springville

## Spontaneous Memorial

Frank McEntire's annual installation's final incarnation  
by Shawn Rossiter

At the Springville Museum of Art last week Frank McEntire installed the tenth-anniversary version of *Spontaneous Memorial*, the project inspired by the lives lost on September 11th that he has exhibited every year for the past eight.

McEntire's project was inspired by the "spontaneous memorials" he and his wife Marjorie found on a visit to New York two months after the 9/11 attacks. "Altar-like memorials abutted the city sidewalks wherever we found a fire station or a fence," he writes. "New Yorkers and visitors continually replenished the make-shift altars throughout the city offering flowers, notes, prayers, even their silence—tokens of remembrance, admiration, and grief."

When McEntire returned from New York he felt compelled to compose 3,000 remembrances of each person killed in the attacks. After reading *Portraits 9/11/01: The Collected "Portraits of Grief" from The New York Times* (Edited by Howell Raines, 2002), McEntire was inspired to use the biographical sketches and photos of the September 11th victims as materials for collage. From there his ideas evolved to the point where the project became both an emotional response to the tragedy -- "a meditation on the purpose and value of life" -- and an aesthetic exploration of the concept of memorialization.

*Spontaneous Memorial* was first exhibited at Utah Valley University in 2004. McEntire has shown it every September since, adding a new element each year.

"When I work in series, I find as many variations on a single theme, or use of a particular object, as possible . . ." he says. "*Spontaneous Memorial* gave me the opportunity to work extensively on a single theme (memorial) over an extended period of time (eight years)."

The core of the exhibit is a partly enclosed space that functions as a shrine to the dead.<sup>[1]</sup> At its center, a cube, inspired by the Ka'aba in Mecca, is encased in glass. On its top a triangular vase holds ashes and fifty blank tags. Price tags, with their weighty symbolic quality -- the price of an item for sale, the cost of a life, the identity of a corpse in a morgue -- became the base for his *Portrait* collages.<sup>[2]</sup> Spatters and drips of red, yellow, gold, silver and black enamel paint serve to give "the tags a sense of abstraction in order to create emotional distance." These are tied to a grid structure that surrounds the cube and calls to mind the fences or protective structures raised

around memorials of the innocent or people of note. Finally, three hand-made music stands hold two cut-up copies of The New York Times publication and a third complete copy.[3]

Around this contemplative core additional works have been added over the years. To an old oak roll-top desk complete with ledgers McEntire affixed blank tags, inviting viewers to comment.[4] A wall-mounted tithing table acquired during the renovation of an LDS chapel was turned into "Message Table," its slots filled with tags and pens for patrons to write comments and hang them on the "Fence." A hymn board from the same chapel became "331" when its slots for holding one-digit number cards to identify hymns was filled with the "Most-wanted Iraqi" playing cards developed by the U.S. military. A nearby wooden music stand holds an old Mormon hymnal, opened to number 331 titled, "Oh, Say What Is Truth?" The paint-splattered black-and-white photos from the *Portraits* collages were enlarged and hung to cover an entire wall.[5] A priest's stole draped on a wardrobe stand became "Fly with the Angels," a reminder of Flight 93; its title came from the words a participant inscribed on the back of one of the exhibit's memorial tags.

During the past eight years, in addition to his full-time job, McEntire has been extremely busy with an intense exhibition schedule (over twenty-five exhibits in and outside of Utah) as well as curatorial projects (see the Doug Snow retrospective up this month, [page 7](#)). Every summer, though he returns to *Spontaneous Memorial* as he prepares to install it in a new location. Looking back on this he says, "I reflected on the individuals whose lives were taken each time I touched one of the memorial tags or found ways to work with the 9/11 theme—a humbling experience."

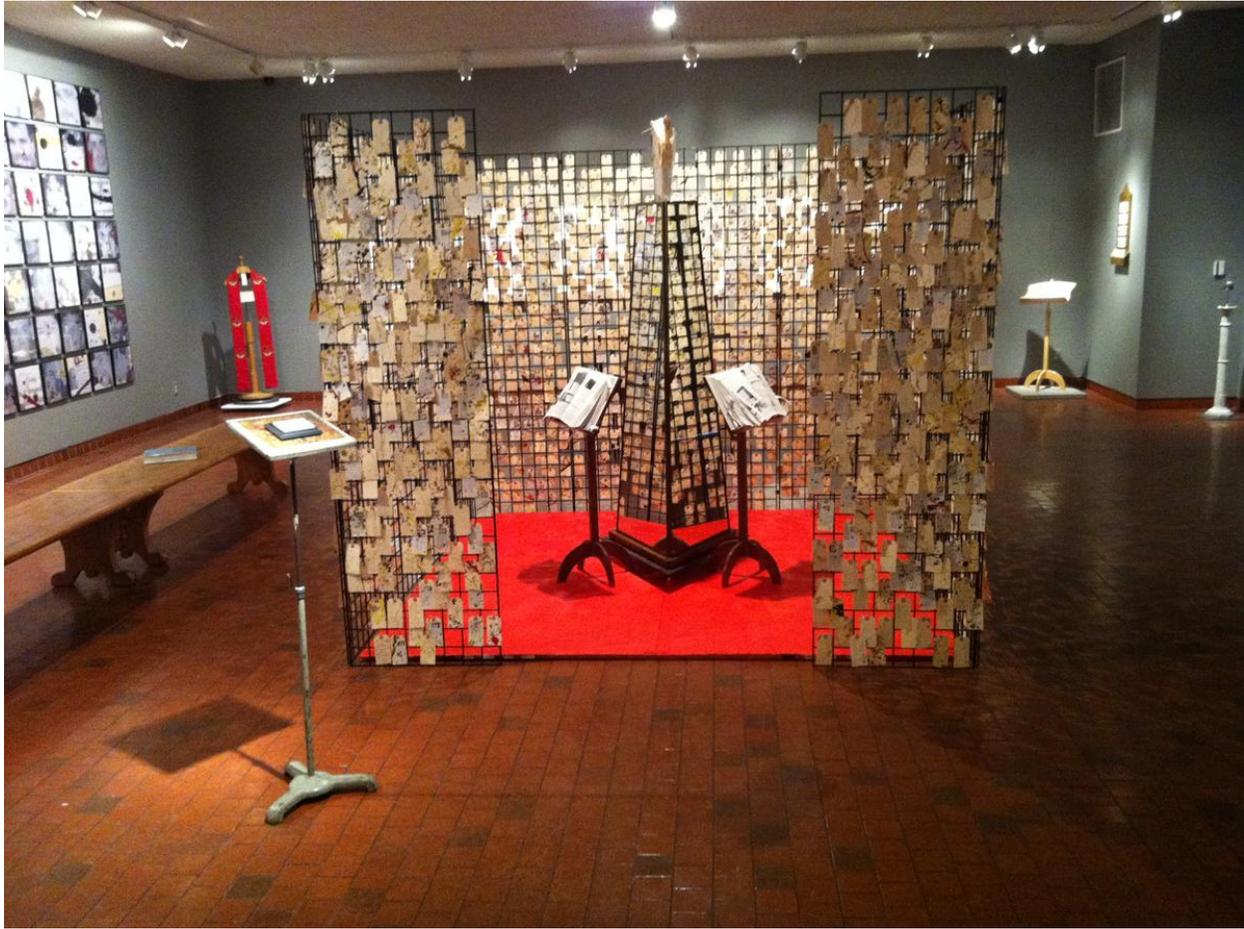
As he installed *Spontaneous Memorial* for the last time McEntire says he was conscious what coverage of the event has done to its memory. "Every time I've turned on news channels or read a newspaper or magazine this past few weeks, there's been 9/11 coverage. An out-of-state art dealer friend told me a year ago that she was tired of such coverage." So, saturation, McEntire, says, was of some concern. "My interest, however, has been to explore 'memorial' not only as a way to remember an historical event and honor the dead, but also as a form or artistic expression in itself." With *Spontaneous Memorial*, he's accomplished all three.

Spontaneous Memorial is at the Springville Museum of Art through. You can view more of Frank McEntire's work at his [website](#).

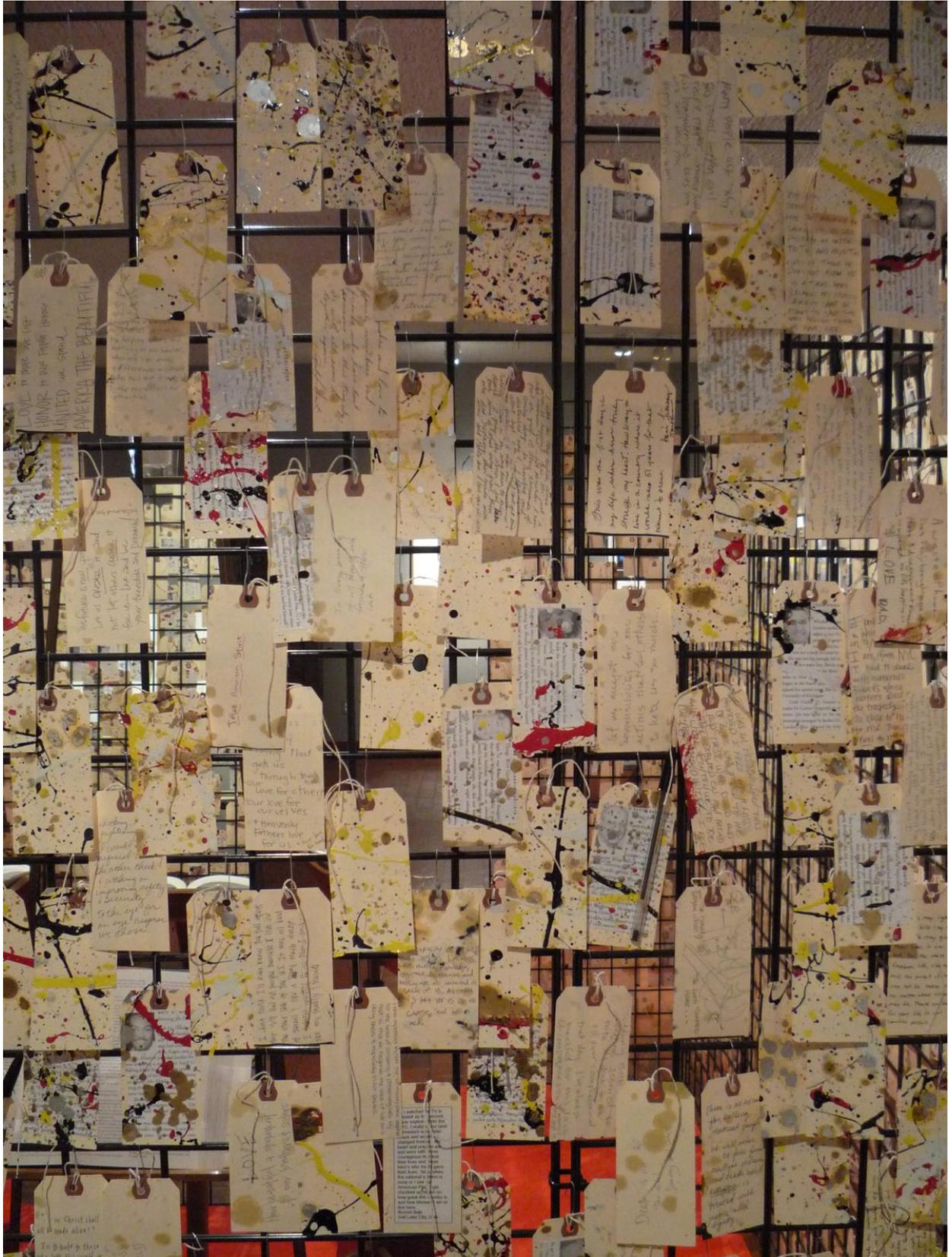
Photos by Frank McEntire



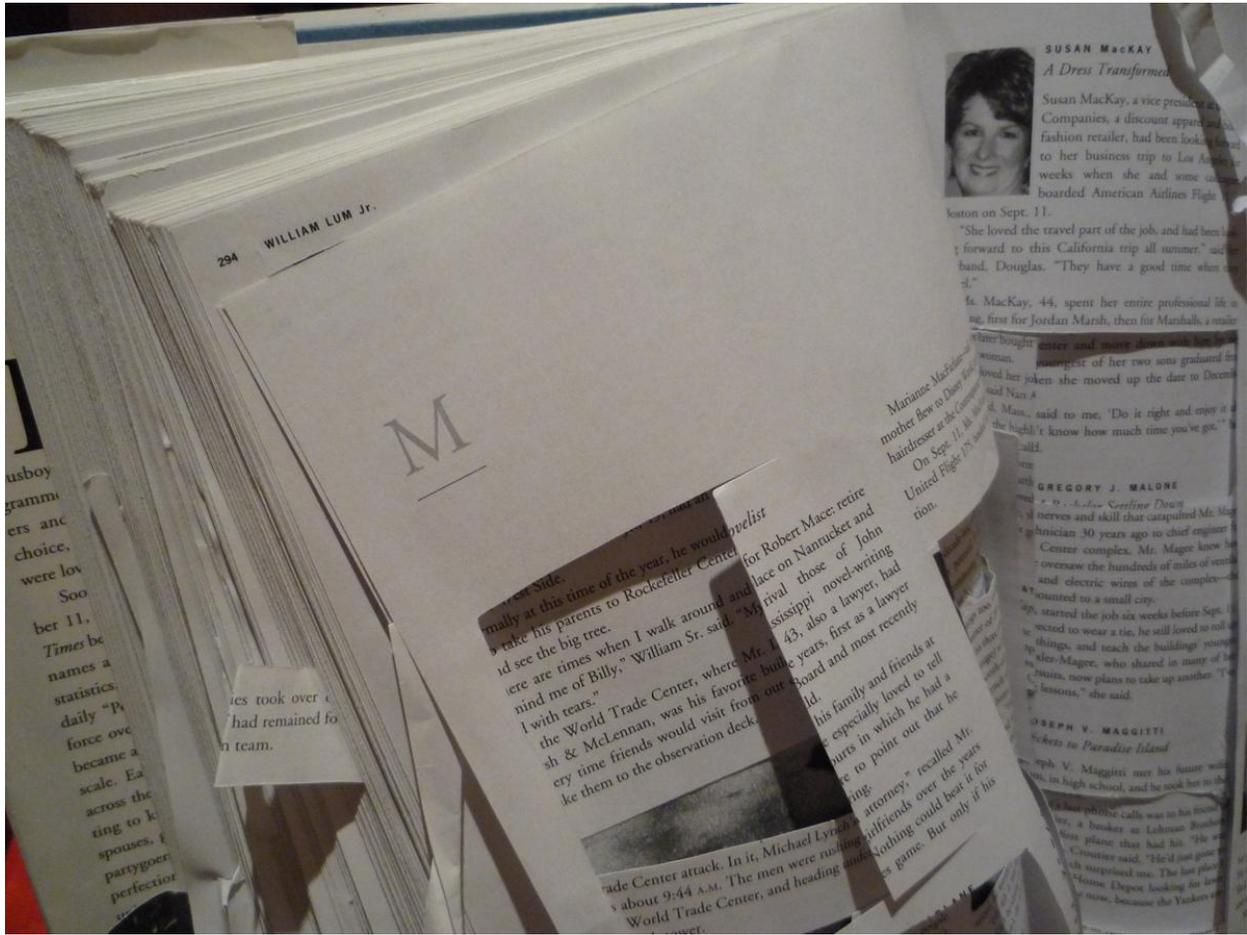
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...take his parents to Rockefeller Center  
...ere are times when I walk around and  
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I with tears."  
...the World Trade Center, where Mr.  
...sh & McLennan, was his favorite  
...cry time friends would visit from our  
...ke them to the observation deck.  
...for Robert Mace; retire  
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...especially loved to tell  
...hours in which he had a  
...to point out that he  
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...attorney," recalled Mr.  
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...es game. But only if his

**SUSAN MACKAY**  
*A Dress Transformed*  
Susan MacKay, a vice president of... Companies, a discount apparel and... fashion retailer, had been looking forward to her business trip to Los Angeles... weeks when she and some colleagues boarded American Airlines Flight...  
Boston on Sept. 11.  
"She loved the travel part of the job, and had been looking forward to this California trip all summer," said her husband, Douglas. "They have a good time when they travel."  
Ms. MacKay, 44, spent her entire professional life in... first for Jordan Marsh, then for Marshall, a retailer... later bought... enter and more down with her... woman.  
... youngest of her two sons graduated from... loved her when she moved up the date to December... said Nan A... d. Man... said to me, "Do it right and enjoy it... she might not know how much time you've got."  
...all.

**GREGORY J. MALONE**  
... nerves and skill that catapulted Mr. Magee... technician 30 years ago to chief engineer of... Center complex. Mr. Magee knew how... oversaw the hundreds of miles of ventila... and electric wires of the complex...  
...ounted to a small city...  
...started the job six weeks before Sept. 11...  
...ected to wear a tie, he still loved to roll up... things, and teach the building's young...  
...ales-Magee, who shared in many of his...  
...plans to take up another "T...  
...lessons," she said.

**JOSEPH V. MAGGITI**  
*Sets to Paradise Island*  
Joseph V. Maggiti met his future wife... in high school, and he took her to the...  
...calls was to his brother...  
...a broker at Lehman Brothers...  
...plane that had his...  
...Conner said, "He'd just given me...  
...ch surprised me. The last plane...  
...James Degeon looking for...  
...more, because the Yankees...

...ade Center attack. In it, Michael Lynn...  
...s about 9:44 a.m. The men were rushing...  
...World Trade Center, and heading...  
...wer.

**FOUR**



FIVE



SIX



# **Springville Museum of Art remembrance asks hard questions about 9/11**

**'Spontaneous Memorial' • Frank McEntire's exhibit is rooted in New York's makeshift street remembrances.**

**By Glen Warchol The Salt Lake Tribune**

**Published September 9th 2011 4:29 pm**

**W**hen Frank McEntire visited New York two months after the 9/11 attacks, what impressed the artist most were the spontaneous memorials that popped up all over New York City to honor the nearly 3,000 victims.

"Everywhere there was a fence or a fire station, it seemed like someone had created a memorial with photographs, candles and written messages," McEntire says. He retained a visual memory of those makeshift monuments until 2004 when he unveiled his exhibit, "Spontaneous Memorial," which grows each year. It first appeared at Utah Valley University and has appeared annually since at venues in Utah and Idaho.

The latest, largest and perhaps last in the series is being exhibited at the Springville Museum of Art. "Each year, I add new elements," he says. "This year, the 10th anniversary, is a culmination for me."

McEntire acknowledges he may not have the psychic and emotional energy to continue "Spontaneous Memorial" after this year.

Unlike the thousands of memorials and remembrances that will be rolled out around the nation this week, McEntire's show goes beyond simply honoring the victims to ask hard questions.

One of the installations in the exhibition, "Fence," in fact, may be off-putting to many viewers. It's an 8-foot-square wire cube covered with price tags. Each morguelike toe tag recalls a victim of the attack and speaks to the difficulty of identifying bodies after the explosions and fires. It also questions the cost of a human life and the continuing cost of 9/11 to the nation. McEntire encourages viewers to write their thoughts on the tags. One says, "How could we ever forget the madness and sadness of this day? What a waste of life." On the back of the tag for victim Edward Beyea, someone wrote: "It happened while I ate breakfast."

Perhaps even more controversial is the fact that McEntire's cube is reminiscent of Mecca's Ka'aba, the most sacred site in Islam.

In another installation in the exhibit, the artist displays cards from the infamous "Most Wanted Iraqi" deck, which included Saddam Hussein and was distributed in 2003 to U.S. troops. The cards are arranged on a hymn board from an old Mormon chapel along with the posting for Hymn No. 331: "Oh, Say What Is Truth?"

McEntire says the work asks viewers to ponder the politics that linked 9/11 to Saddam Hussein and led to costly wars for the United States. "It's subtle, not hitting you over the head. But it's there," he says of the work's statement.

McEntire acknowledges the challenges behind creating an artwork that memorializes 9/11.

"Everyone is so sick and tired of [9/11 remembrances], but at the same time people's attention span is so short they need to be constantly reminded," he says. "In creating these works, I found myself wrestling with the ideas of exploitation, commercialization and privacy for the victims."



Photo by Scott Sommerdorf | The Salt Lake Tribune "Material Evidence"



Photo by Scott Sommerdorf | The Salt Lake Tribune A section of "The Grid"



Photo by Frank McEntire | A section of "The Grid"



Photo by Scott Sommerdorf | The Salt Lake Tribune "331"

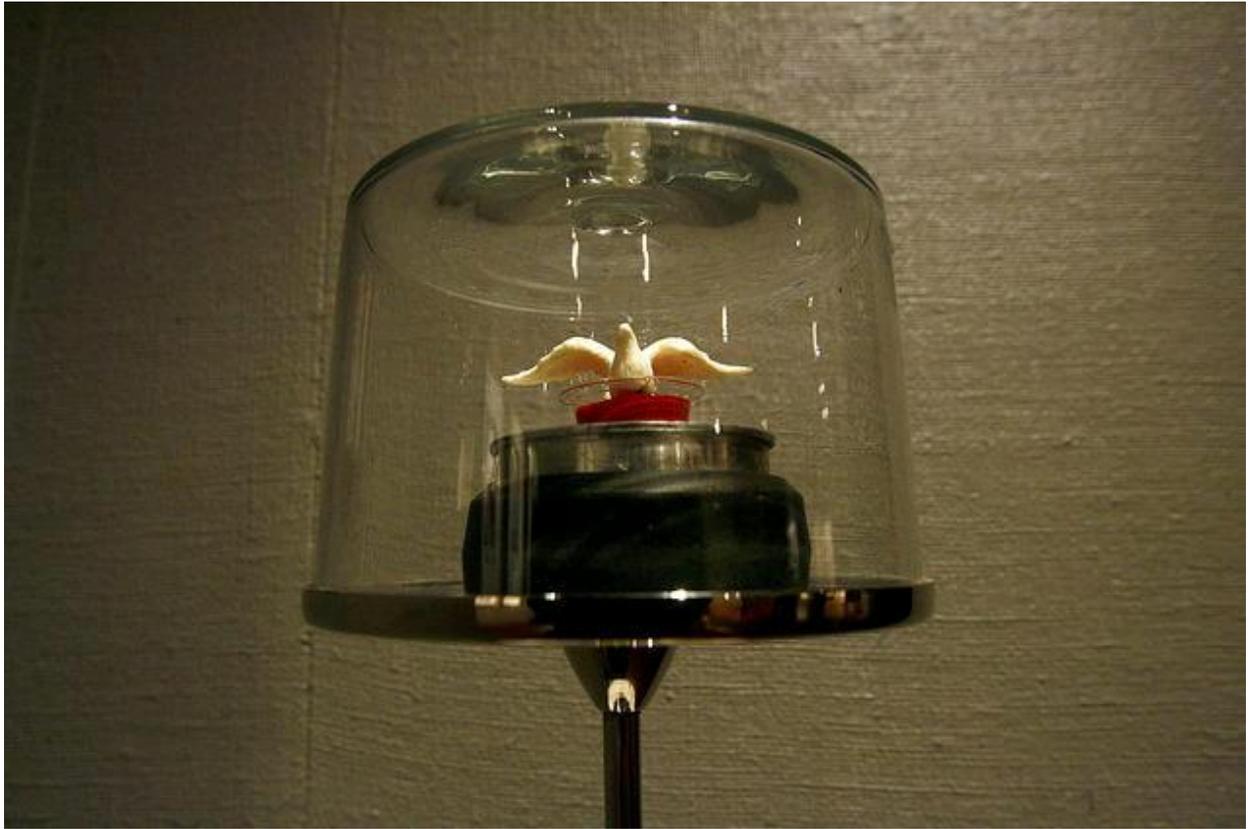


Photo by Scott Sommerdorf | The Salt Lake Tribune "Flight 93"



Photo by Scott Sommerdorf | The Salt Lake Tribune

A cabinet above "The Ledger" with a loop of TV news coverage from 9/11 playing inside is part of Frank McEntire's exhibit called "Spontaneous Memorial" that honors the victim



Photo by Frank McEntire | Installation view of "The Grid" and "Fence"



Photo by Frank McEntire | A section of "The Ledger" with two "Portraits"

FYI, Spontaneous Memorial exhibition:

<http://artistsofutah.org/15bytes/11sep/page8.html>

<http://www.sltrib.com/sltrib/entertainment/52544091-81/art-artist-asks-exhibit.html.csp#.TmzSvSC9NyQ.mailto>

<http://www.facebook.com/photo.php?v=1923842536719>

ADDITIONAL PHOTOS by FRANK MCENTIRE

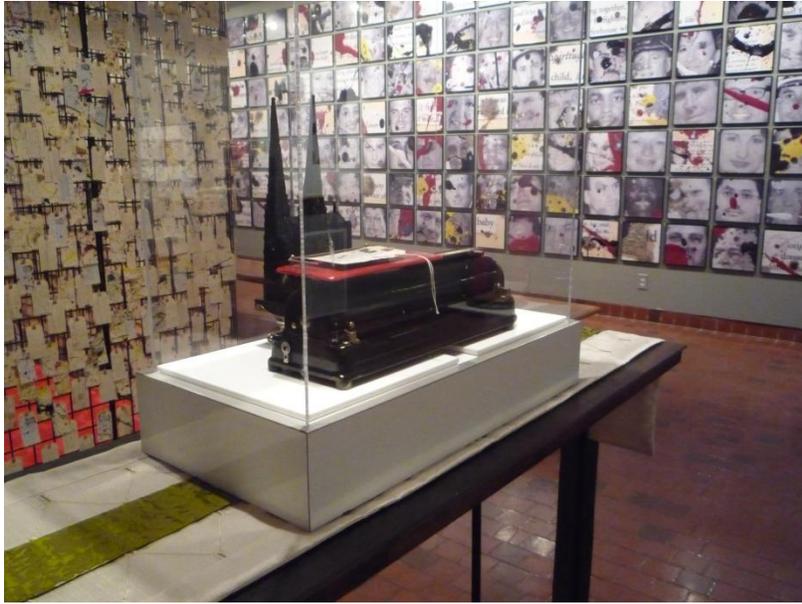


Message Table



“Ledger” viewed from “Fence”







## 'Spontaneous Memorial' exhibit evokes memories, emotions of 9/11

Julie Stoddard - Daily Herald | Posted: Thursday, September 22, 2011 12:02 am

**A**shlee Whitaker walks into every gallery at the Springville Museum of Art each day. As associate curator of collections and exhibits, it's her job. But one exhibit room is different than the others.

"When I walk into the gallery containing 'Spontaneous Memorial,' I just feel that there is a different reverence and spirit of memorial there than you feel in the rest of the museum," Whitaker said. "It evokes a lot of memories and a lot of emotions because it deals with 9/11, deals with loss and even with some of the political tensions and the grief that our whole nation felt after those attacks."

It's been 10 years since the attacks of 9/11 took place and this year, the SMOA marked the anniversary with Salt Lake City artist Frank McEntire's thought-provoking exhibit, on display through Oct. 14.

"This is an installation that allows each individual to have a very personal experience," Whitaker said. "It also allows viewers to interact in a way that's very personal, which I think allows viewers to come and have a very introspective experience."

Consisting of multiple artworks ranging from tables to picture frames, the exhibit encourages patrons to enjoy the different elements without feeling rushed.

"I think that it's very possible for someone to come and take something away with them, or to remember something, or to learn something they didn't know before about their feelings with 9/11," Whitaker said.

"Spontaneous Memorial" has been on display every year since 9/11, making appearances at Utah Valley University, Brigham Young University and more. This year, the 65-year-old McEntire decided to ask the SMOA to host "Spontaneous Memorial" because it is the final year the exhibit will be on display. He said he felt the museum offered a space of reflection the exhibit needed.

"I created the exhibit after being invited to participate in an art show at Utah Valley University," McEntire said. "The exhibit was scheduled for September and because of that month, I thought I would try to do something related to that September 11th experience for the exhibition."

Several of McEntire's works include portraits of victims of the attack.

"The victims are why we commemorate the event, which is why I included portraits of victims," McEntire said. "I happened upon the New York Times publication 'Portraits of [Grief],' which included not only photographs, but short biographical statements about each victim. I used clippings from the book to make collages for each of the victims."

McEntire hopes patrons will reflect on the power art has to make people think about the human condition and remember those throughout history who have been affected by the worst human experiences, such as the attacks on 9/11,

As stated by an exhibit visitor on a tag, "No one is truly dead until there is no one left who remembers them. May each victim of 9/11 be remembered always and thus live."



Springville Museum of Art The Springville Museum of Art marked the 10th anniversary of 9/11 with Salt Lake City artist Frank McEntire's "Spontaneous Memorial" exhibit.

Read more: [http://www.heraldextra.com/entertainment/arts-and-theatre/article\\_919a00ce-3fc4-5cc9-90f6-7ed7cd49ffe6.html#ixzz1YmxFOHit](http://www.heraldextra.com/entertainment/arts-and-theatre/article_919a00ce-3fc4-5cc9-90f6-7ed7cd49ffe6.html#ixzz1YmxFOHit)







