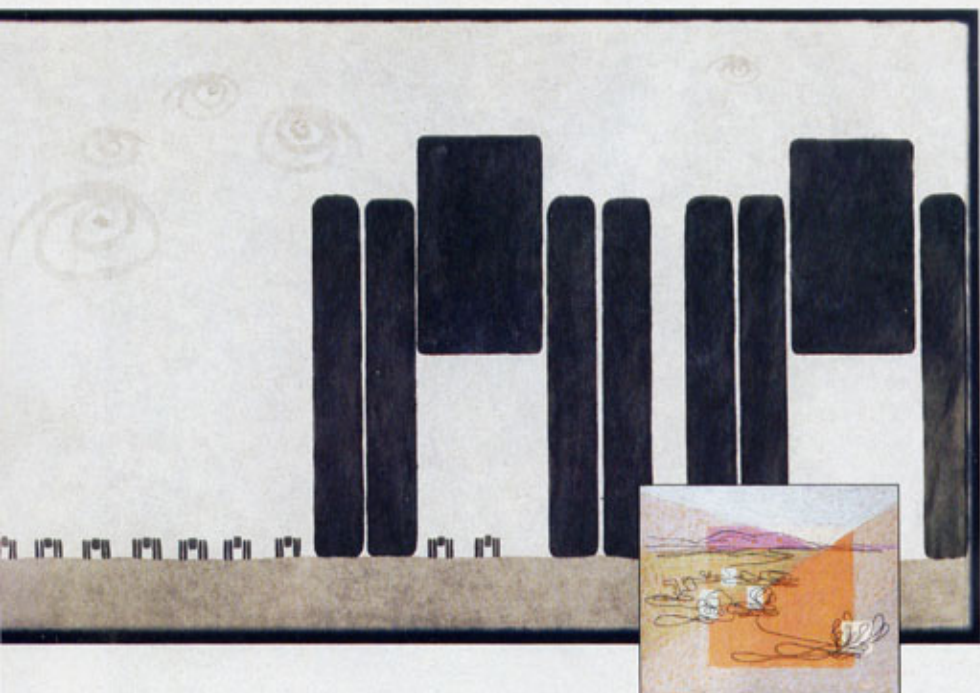


Artistic Activism

These creative change-makers are using art to send a message.



Environmental Justice

Chris Carraher, aka **Jack Dandy**, is an ecological activist and visual artist whose work centers around her home: the vast desert that lies near the mouth of California's Joshua Tree National park, which Carraher describes as "having one foot in the wilderness and one in civilization."

Why is the desert landscape such a source of inspiration?

The desert is a laboratory. It's a lovely place to observe the world, because there's not so much visual clutter and there is nothing interrupting my vision. In a way, it's very simplified but also very dynamic.

What's the interplay between your art and activism?

Sometimes I have to get off my environmental soapbox and observe through other mediums. My art is the only place where I can really process beyond the rational and move into the other sources of internal intelligence.

What do you see as the greatest threat to your area?

Right now, claim-seekers are descending on us, especially regarding energy and expansion. They want to set up huge solar plants, which literally scalp the earth and destroy our ecosystem. The solution is to put solar on all the roofs in metropolitan areas rather than one large, environmentally destructive plant.

How does your genderqueer identity mesh with your ecological activism?

It's tricky here, to be in a rurally conservative area and have the gender identity that I do. Online is a place where I assert my gender identity. Here, I don't want it to be the key issue and topic, when there are other issues I want to work on. **[Kristin A. Smith]**

