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GREEN PARTY!

FRITZ HAEG'S buildings, *birds' nests* and groovy get-togethers

FRITZ HAEG IS an architect, artist, designer, educator, ecologist and social activist. The eagle's nest he installed over the Whitney Museum's entrance for its 2008 biennial reveals that behind his overlapping interests is a desire to infect the contemporary art establishment with pragmatic ecological thought. Like Buckminster Fuller, the inventor of the geodesic dome who sought, in Haeg's words, to encourage "meaningful global change with precise, modest acts," Haeg has paired theoretical groundwork with an ever-growing roster of collaborators and site-specific installations. He is probably best known for *Edible Estates*, his ongoing initiative to replace front lawns with miniature agricultural plots. (Regional prototypes have been installed in Kansas, California, New Jersey and Texas.) In London, he was commissioned by Tate Modern to show in last year's *Global Cities* exhibition. Haeg credits the British tradition of intricate garden design as a source of inspiration, adding that his intention was "to demonstrate that a place for producing food can also be a beautiful urban amenity." His latest venture, *Animal Estates* (of which the eagle's nest is a part), aims to welcome displaced native creatures back to cities around the world using smart habitat design, creating "homes" for "clients" like flying squirrels, badgers, beavers and bees. Between 2000 and 2006, Haeg also invited a network of friends and enthusiasts including Pipilotti Rist, Pae White and Jeff Burton to descend upon the geodesic dome-topped house in Los Angeles that is home to the Fritz Haeg Studio. He hosted 30 Sunday-evening Sundown Salons, which revolved around topics ranging from the idealistic to the esoteric. The salons' end has left a dome-shaped void in the lives of those Los Angelenos for whom an "interactive culinary performance," a "celebration of extreme knitting" or a recording of David Bowie narrating *Peter and the Wolf* was a favourite method of whiling away a lazy Sunday. Miki Chang

Edible Estates: Attack on the Front Lawn is published by Metropolis Books and available from Distributed Art Publishers. www.artbook.com. Fritz Haeg photographed by Todd Cole

