

## Neptune's Portal Creator Lives on the Edge By Louise Julig

Jack Lampl knows a lot about edges. Since moving to Encinitas from Oregon in 1986 and into a bluff-top home a few years ago, he is well aware of the multitude of edges and boundaries he encounters here: The US/Mexican border, the boundary between land and sea, socioeconomic boundaries between people that frequent his neighborhood and even his own back "yard" overlooking the ocean, which is on the brink between

complexity one finds there is both challenging and rewarding. "In all the different work that I've had the good fortune to be able to do, the one thing that is consistent is being interested in the edges and boundaries between things, either physical or psychological or metaphorical."

A '73 Harvard graduate in visual and environmental studies, he promptly went to India after graduation, living

groups and organizations is to expose the unconscious dynamics: Helping people expose what the unconscious dynamics are in an organization and understand how powerfully those dynamics impact what's going on. My specialty these days is using art and music in that process."

Although he hesitates to identify himself as an artist, Lampl is constantly making things, from an interactive multimedia installation for a dance studio window to a handmade banister evocative of waving strands of kelp for his home. He's also the creator and steward of the public art project in Encinitas known as Neptune's Portal.

Given his proclivity for cross-pollinating between technology, art and social systems, and his fascination with the edges of things, it seems fitting that Neptune's Portal is a bit of a mash-up of art installation, Internet drop box and social experiment.

The Portal, in a nutshell, is a "community-based interactive art process" that looks a bit like a Seussian, antenna-sprouting green creature with a gaping pink mouth. A placard explains that passersby can insert their head into the opening, press a small red button and record whatever they have to offer, which will then be posted to the Web. (Encountering the Portal by chance is part of the experience, so we'll leave finding its location as an exercise for the reader.)

He sees the piece as a self-organizing organism that gives people an opportunity to leave their imprint by recording a little slice of whoever chooses to contribute. The results, several hundred posts so far at [www.neptunesportal.tv](http://www.neptunesportal.tv), run the gamut of human expression. As Lampl notes, "All sorts of levels of consciousness are dropped in these little slots of time."

Encountering the Portal gives one the opportunity to be both an observer and a participant, which fits in nicely with what Lampl focuses on in his teaching—"Live your life, but also notice yourself living your life, rather than noticing yourself thinking about living your life." ☺

solid ground and thin air.

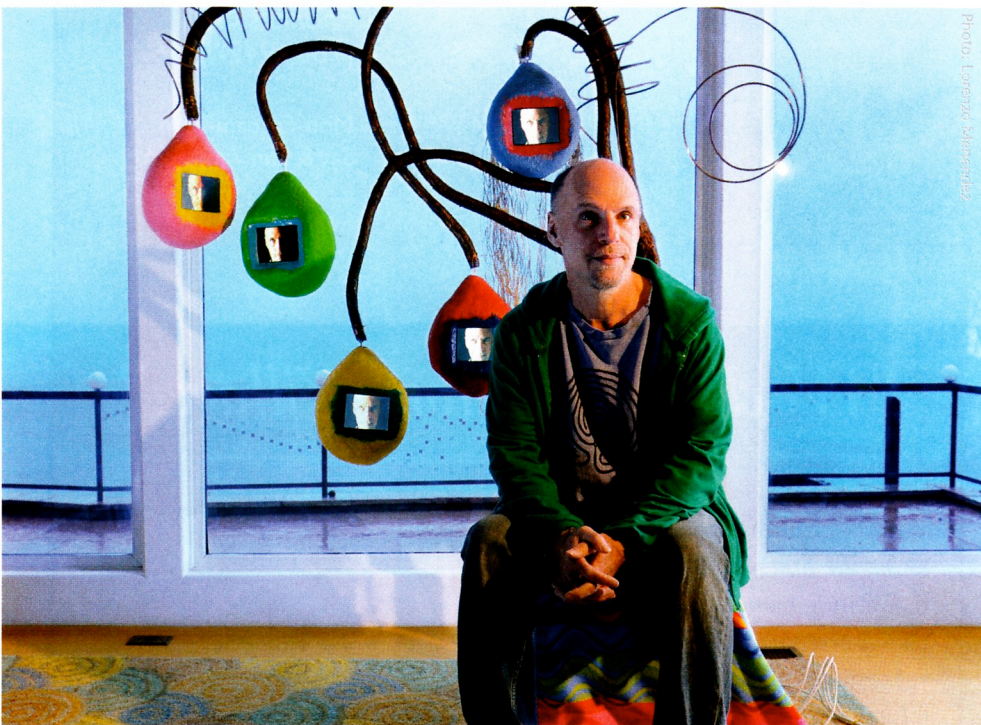
"When I first lived here I was scared to go to the edge (of the property). But it was more I was on the edge. 'What cliff have I gotten myself to?' I'm increasingly feeling more comfortable or accepting of the fact that we're all living on an edge, with death hanging. There's always something crumbling. We are at the edge of a continent. The bluffs are collapsing. There's a huge battle going on between the sea and the land."

But the edge is fertile ground, Lampl insists, and learning to thrive in the

and traveling there and training as a cabinetmaker. "I went from Harvard, which is a bastion of rationality, to India, which in some ways is very irrational, and then found something to do that is very practical. I find making things is an important offset to thinking about things."

Lampl now works as an organizational consultant, artist and video producer, with a special passion for leadership education and helping organizations understand and work with their group dynamics.

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