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Maryann Webster to Exhibit 'Curiosities of Nature' at Park City's Kimball Art Center

PARK CITY, Utah – Salt Lake City-based artist Maryann Webster explores the dichotomous relationship between humans and nature in her ceramic and mixed media work, on display from Nov. 7, 2008, to Jan. 8., 2009, at the Kimball Art Center, located in the heart of Park City, Utah, home of the Sundance Film Festival. The exhibit, "Maryann Webster: Curiosities of Nature," showcases Webster's personal concern for the fragility of nature and intention to evoke cultural responsibility.

The exhibit represents a contemporary "Cabinet of Curiosities," addressing current issues of conflict between the human and natural world. The Cabinet of Curiosity comes from the 16th-century fascination with nature, when people of intellectual importance would assemble a room with relics and artifacts from nature. The pseudoscience of the time, it mixed alchemy, religion and superstition, which allowed for bizarre premises about the world. Webster's "Cabinet" includes reliquary boxes, basins and wall pieces.

Webster's porcelain reliquary boxes represent spiritual containers for lost nature. The "Dream Reliquary" is a green cabinet of the psyche containing fragments of insight from the subconscious world.

The exhibit's basins also are created in 16th-century style, inspired by the artist Bernard Palissy (1510-1590). While Palissy's basins were likely inspired by holy water basins and represented nature in its unadulterated form, Webster's basins represent nature damaged by human carelessness. Webster notes water is the central symbolic element of each piece as it is a fundamental component of all life.

The wall pieces function as environmental icons illustrating concern for the natural world. Webster believes the environmental crisis also is a spiritual crisis because of an

underlying anxiety that current over-consumption of the planet's resources is not sustainable. The "Lunacy" figure expresses the emotional state of disconnect between humans and nature.

Webster, who holds her masters in fine arts from the University of Utah, also teaches ceramics, sculpture and drawing at the University of Utah. Her work is included in private and public collections across the country, and most recently one of her pieces was exhibited at San Francisco's De Young Museum. Webster's work also is currently part of the ongoing Confrontational Ceramics Exhibition in New York, curated by Judith Schwartz.

For more information, contact Erin Linder, director of exhibitions for the Kimball Art Center at 435-649-8882 or exhibitions@kimball-art.org.