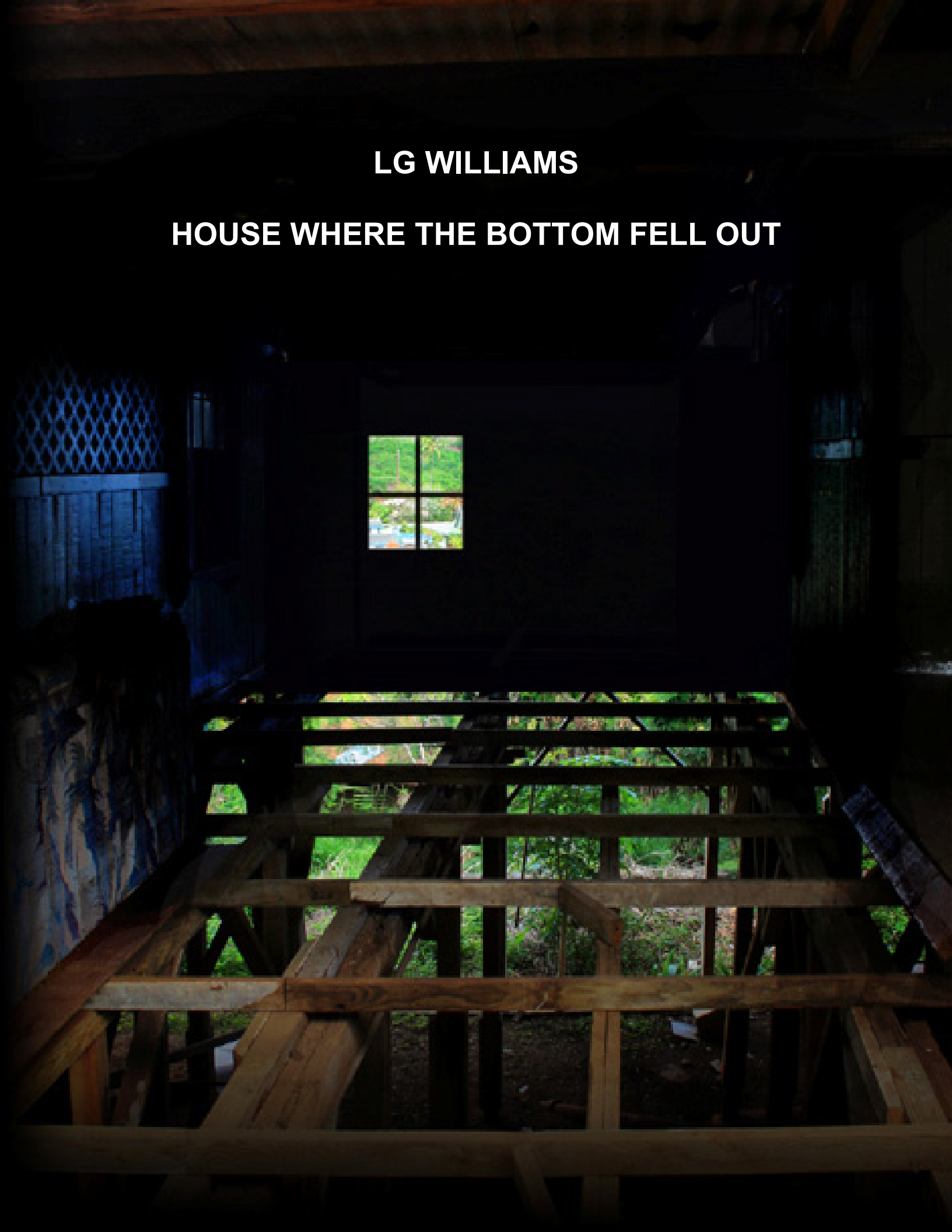


**LG WILLIAMS**

**HOUSE WHERE THE BOTTOM FELL OUT**





November 2008  
Site-Specific Project Proposal

# HOUSE WHERE THE BOTTOM FELL OUT

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## HAPPY VALLEY (MAUI), HAWAII

**HOUSE WHERE THE BOTTOM FELL OUT (2007-2009)** by the American artist LG Williams is a work of self-proclaimed 'House Art' (i.e., Site-specific art), located in Happy Valley, Hawaii, a remote rainforest in Maui. While remaining determinedly focused on issues Williams defines as vital to our time and sculpture in particular, Williams has devised a visual prophecy, an epicenter, a precedent setting artwork which radically examines the local and global influence of 'self-interest'.

### Preliminary Project Objectives

1. Secure a long/short term future for the site-specific sculpture.
2. Solicit sponsorship and contributions to fund on-going publicity, advertisement and endowment for the project.
3. Complete a book on the project.
4. Complete a documentary on the project.
5. Organize and fund a symposium for the project.



### Project Novelty and Importance

*House Where The Bottom Fell Out* will soon be recognized as one of the 21st century's most significant works of art, an international site-specific sculpture located in Hawaii inspired by the worst crisis in modern, global financial history, yet highlighting and underscoring the fact of global connectivity and community. Additionally, this artwork will be the first major international sculpture located in the State of Hawaii.



### Project Overview

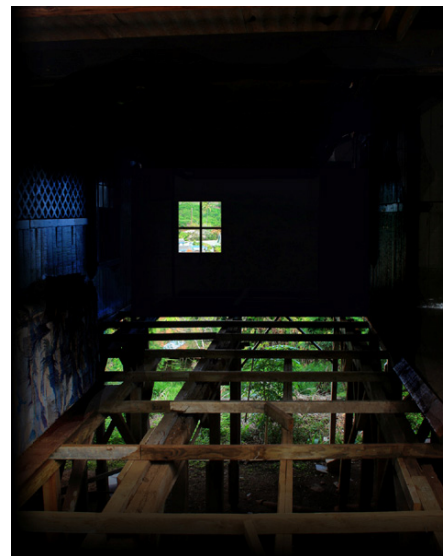
The site-specific sculpture, *House Where The Bottom Fell Out*, is one plantation style house, approximately 2010 square feet, with the entire floor completely removed from



the building. The sculpture cannot be walked on or in; as the title states: the artwork has no structure to stand on. The sculpture can only be viewed. Yet, for viewers, the artwork offers a distinct interactive and imaginative experience of walking around and viewing the sculpture's changing, destabilizing features.

The structure is unique in that it is cantilevered alongside a great, ancient rainforest and valley rift. Together, the architecture and environment offer viewers the opportunity to see the entire artwork comprehensively as a whole: one can experience the artistic modifications on the house, from the exterior into the interior space (through doors, windows and cracks), and further still, back beyond through to the exterior background landscape.

**ADDITIONALLY, AT NIGHT**, the artwork's bleak imago and prognostication is turned on its head by an unlikely, ephemeral vision: bright lights turn on to illuminate the darkened interior of the structure and its surroundings below, giving off a remarkable impression that somehow the sculpture is aloft and









a float above its very foundation. As a result, once can imagine, this crisis can have a happy ending in Happy Valley.

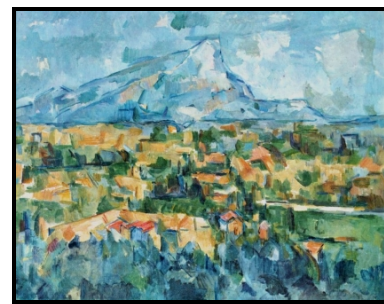
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**From Williams perspective**, *House Where The Bottom Fell Out* does not shy away from tackling tough issues head-on, or weigh-in on heavy judgments. This bold artwork is an obvious *pièce de résistance*, a biting message from the most hidden sphere, a critical truism manifested from the most remote land mass, ecology and community on the planet. Indeed, the artwork's unprecedented spatial setting in the heart of the spectacular, sacred, and remote Iao Valley invariably and admittedly is an unruly, defiant artistic provocation – a remarkable ruin rarely visited.

On the other hand, being rich in verve and tradition, this sculpture emerges out of nowhere to mark the most defining moment in modern world history: the point where the bottom fell out. Through and through, the structure's façade, core and daily transformations willingly betrays remarkable sacrifice and hope -- unaffected by popularity or recognition.

A rich layering of references, puns, similes, and metaphors distinguish Williams's, *'House Where The Bottom Fell Out'*, from traditional, cut or paste modernist approaches to architectural sculptures like those of Gordon Matta-Clark, and the conventionally episodic themes consuming human history like *Partially Buried Woodshed* by Robert Smithson. Instead, Williams's contemporary vision emphasizes the centrality of 'embodied' metaphor informed by the pioneering research and writings of the artist's friend, George Lakoff.

Historically Williams's imagery, ambition, and multi-faceted transformative artistic agenda clearly beckons the artist Paul Cezanne, especially in light of Cezanne's innovative practice focusing upon critical structures and spatial planes, while exploring visual perception intersecting with the human condition. One can see these conscious artistic concerns clearly in a series of paintings of houses and landscapes by Cezanne of *Montagne Sainte-Victoire* | *Mont Sainte-Victoire* from 1880-1883 and others of *Gardanne* from 1885-1888.



Furthermore, the learned observer will note the *House's* subtle, inverted reference to Williams's colleague Wally Hedrick (1928-2003). However, in contrast to Hedrick's *War*

*Room* (1967-2002) where the destructive artistic force directs the viewer's gaze skyward (ceiling opening) thus emphasizing the transcendental quality of sky and space, Williams's *House* forces the viewer's gaze in the daytime to plummet earthward (floor removed) toward ground and dirt.

### Project Origins

By Williams's own account, the initial idea was breathtakingly simple. In December 2006 he realized that the art market was so globally overvalued with an abundance of suspect artworks, a critical, world financial crisis must be looming. In effect, therefore, Williams saw our current crisis looming. The artist envisioned a time soon "when all hell would break loose" given the fundamental widespread pervasiveness of the new global, perverse situation. Immediately, Williams embarked on the difficult process to bring his insight to realization, of making an artwork wherein modernity wouldn't have a floor to stand on, and to discover a remote, pristine environment necessary to both quickly reorient our imagination and stress our global interconnectedness.

### Major Themes: Project Meaning and Significance

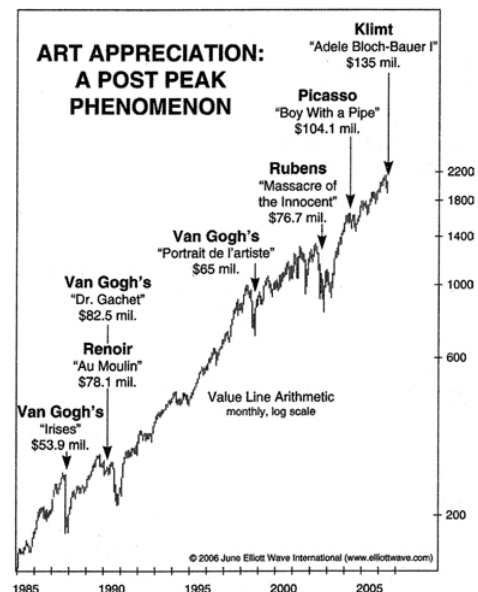
Aside from its sheer bold presence and audacity, the installation's poignant global, environmental, cultural and personal references, satire and puns, make *House Where The Bottom Fell Out* a remarkable, unforgettable artwork. Coupled with a many-faceted, metaphorical presence, the sculpture also becomes a powerful political, social and ecological indictment confronting the viewer with questions about human existence and the inhumanity of society.

### House Art Theme

From the start, Williams's choice of the term 'house art' is itself a highly loaded, coy pun; in that, Williams, a caucasian artist, spins the word-play 'House Art' against 'House music', a style of urban, electronic music developed for dance clubs in the late 1970s and early 1980s and popularized primarily by blacks and Latinos. Additionally, this jest also strikes a nerve when one considers that house music was *not* vital in a 'house', but in dance clubs; whereas Williams's silent 'house art' is *strictly* rural and residential. In fact, this 'house art' is an 'art house'.

### The Subprime Mortgage Crisis Theme

In contemporary and social terms, "House Where The Bottom Fell Out" highlights the



present-day plight of the *Subprime Mortgage Crisis*, which occurred when a sharp rise in home foreclosures started in the United States during the fall of 2006 and became a global financial crisis and risk to the broader global economy beginning in February 2008. In effect, during this crisis the "bottom fell out" of the entire US and global financial markets when 1.3 million U.S. housing properties were subject to foreclosure, up 79% from 2006; subsequently, the Dow-Jones index of the largest companies traded on the U.S. stock market declined 22% in September 2008, the worst week in the index's 118-year history.

The artwork's bleak imago and prognostication is counterbalanced by its strategic, picturesque placement. Nestled upon an ancient valley between breathtaking mountains and the Pacific Ocean, *House Where The Bottom Fell Out's* jarring contrasts invariably leads a viewer to a quick realization and contemporary assessment of human society's interconnectedness and 'home' at-large. While it is true that no man is an island, present Global Warming trends reveal that islands and islets that are hardly above the sea have begun to submerge. Moreover, quoting James Lovelock, "any efforts to counter global warming cannot succeed, in fact, it is already too late." In effect, says Williams, "the bottom has fallen out from the present and future home that houses all of humanity; in that sense this artwork is a memorial."

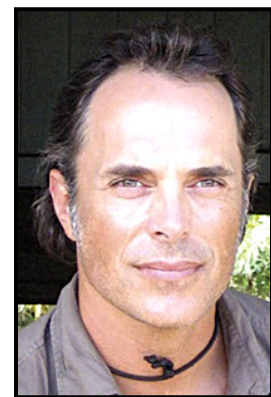
### **Personal Connection**

*House Where The Bottom Fell Out* not only has important artistic and intellectual connotations for the artist, but personal as well. Williams's seminal sculpture professor, Dale Eldred, died when he fell through the floor of his Kansas City West Bottoms studio, trying to save his tools during the massive flooding in 1993. Eldred was one of the most important large-scale, city-wide sculptors of the late 20<sup>th</sup> century, an artist who pioneered connecting place, inspiration and questioning into powerful visual and global truths.

## **ARTIST BIOGRAPHY**

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LG WILLIAMS received his M.F.A from the University of California, Davis and B.A. from the Kansas City Art Institute. He also holds an honorary Ph.D. from ISSA, Cedar Rapids, IA. Williams has taught art, art history and art appreciation courses at the University of California-Davis, University of Southern California, California College of the Arts, and the University of Hawaii, to name a few. Author of many books and publications on art, art criticism, and poetry, Williams has appeared in *Modern Painters*, *Juxtapoz*, *Artweek*, *Art Papers*, *Village Voice*, *San Francisco Chronicle*, *Honolulu Bulletin*, *Sacramento Bee*, *LA Weekly*, *Maui Weekly*, *SF Weekly*, and *The Bay Guardian*. Williams's recent curatorial projects include Wally Hedrick's, *War Room*, at San Francisco International Art Fair.





His most recent book, *Drawing Upon Art: A Workbook for Gardner's Art Through the Ages*: (Cengage Publishing), is due out January 2009.

LG Williams is also an established visual artist with an extensive national and international exhibition schedule. His works have been shown at various venues, among them the Lance Fung Gallery, Steven Wirtz Gallery, Gallery Subversive, Yerba Buena Center for the Arts, di Rosa Art Preserve, and Lucerne Kuntzpanaorama. His artworks are featured in many important museums and private collections. According to Kenneth Baker, an art critic for the San Francisco Chronicle, "Williams wants to hold open a space in which painting might resume in earnest." Three catalogue raisonnées are devoted to the artist: *Point of No Return: LG Williams, 2003–2005*; *LARGE: LG Williams, 2002–2003*; and *LG Williams: An Appreciation, 1985–2000*. His most recent work is the *House Where The Bottom Fell Out, Iao Valley, Maui*; 2008. Williams has won many awards, among them, 1992 Award of Excellence, was included in the 2005 Western Biennial, and honored by induction into the Rat Bastard Protective Association in 2001. His design firm, *lgofbeverlyhills*, has recently appeared in *Modern Painters*, *Juxtapoz*, *Nylon*, *LA Weekly* and *The Encyclopædia Britannica*.

## **FURTHER READING**

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[Hawaii Foreclosures Tripled in Year](#); Honolulu Bulletin, November 13, 2008.

[Paulson Says Treasury Is Shifting Focus of Bailout](#); New York Times, November 13, 2008.

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[Treasury Acts to Shore Up Fannie Mae and Freddie Mac](#); New York Times, July 14, 2008.

[House Art: A Site Specific Sculpture by LG Williams](#); Maui Weekly, June 19, 2008.

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# HAPPY VALLEY, HAWAII

