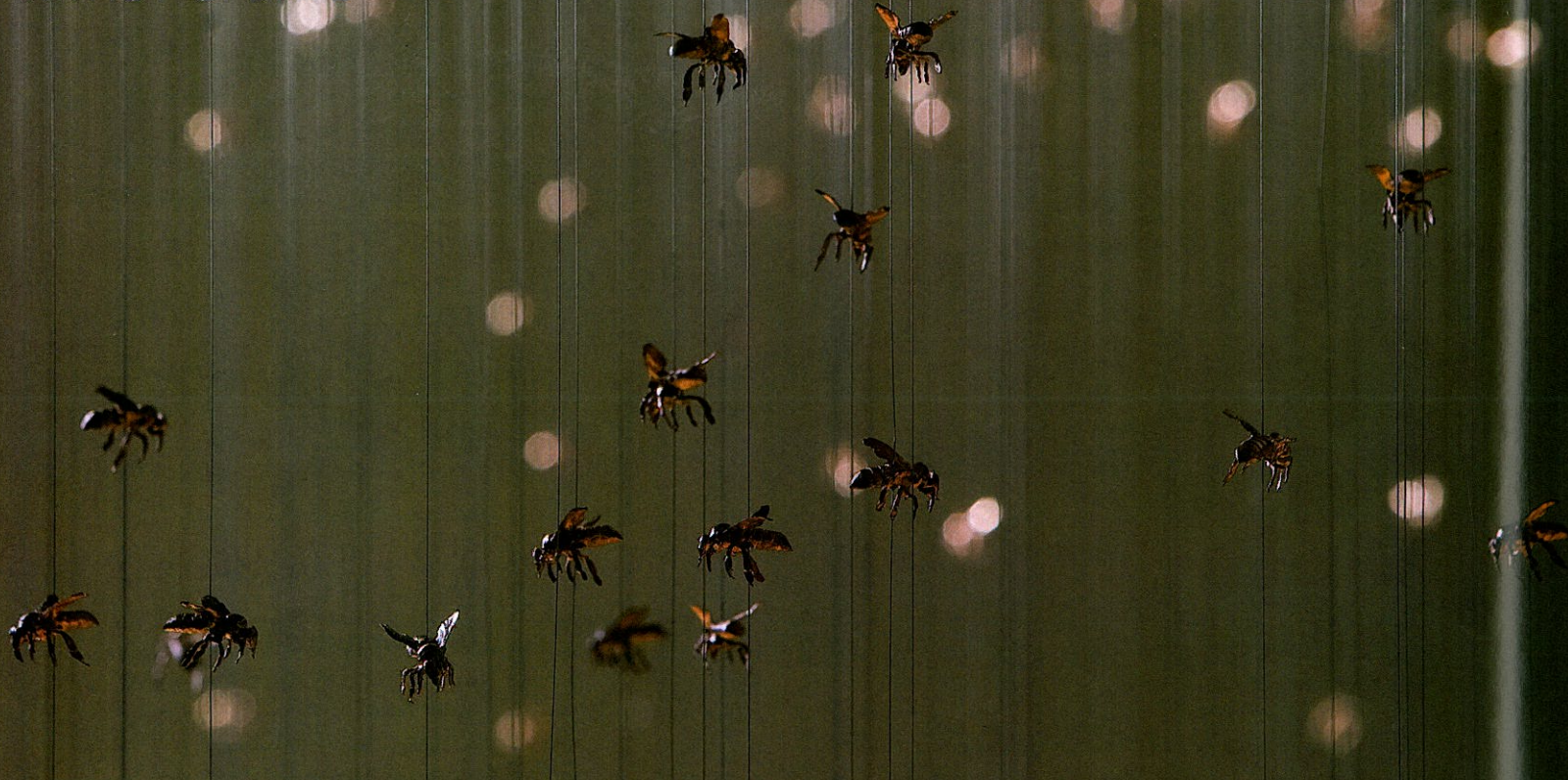


## ARTIST UPDATE



### REBECCA CAMPBELL

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L.A. artist Rebecca Campbell is going a little crazy these days. She is frantically trying to finish pieces for her one-woman show that will be staged at the LA Louver gallery at the end of February. Two years in the making, it is the most ambitious show Campbell has ever done, and it promises a total immersion into nostalgia. Campbell is unapologetic about her use of sentimental recollection, which she calls bittersweet. "It's sweet because of the lovely memories, but sad, too because it's about something that's gone, or maybe never really existed." But don't for a minute think Campbell has gone soft. As always her art comes with an edge. Raised in a strict Mormon household in Salt Lake City, most of her art is connected to the church, her decision to leave, and the tension that created with her family. She will pull heavily from that emotional journey for the new show. In fact, she plans on transforming the gallery into one big installation based on her own childhood memories.

Using the actual front doors from her parents' house, and hand-painted, brick-sized paintings, Rebecca will construct a symbolic façade of her childhood home to fill the entryway to the gallery. The rest of the "house" will be filled with sculptural vignettes. "Since we last talked, I had an epiphany," Rebecca explains. "I was working on all these pieces, but I didn't know how they would show together. I realized I had to build an infrastructure and that's when I came up with the idea of the house." In the "kitchen area" you will find an oven mounted into the wall, with stacks of books inside – all books, not approved by the church, that Rebecca's mother let her read as a child. That small rebellion opened up a whole new world for Rebecca and literally changed the course of life. The av-

ocado green-colored oven is a quirky tribute to her mom who found the courage to buck the system in a small way.

And then there is the tree. Thirty hand blown glass birds are perched on a life-sized tree coated with black velvet and anchored in a fiberglass base covered with salt (a not so subtle reference to the Great Salt Lake). The birds are a vivid blue because they are filled with Windex, another artistic comment about her family's expectation of women as wives, mothers and keepers of the home. "I also like the idea of artificial beauty," Rebecca says. "The idea that the birds are beautiful because of a chemical. And I like the bigger salt metaphor – you know, salt as nourishment, but too much can kill things."

Logistically the show has been challenging, as well. About two months ago, Rebecca wasn't sure she could pull it off. Even finding a beautiful dead tree was proving difficult. "I finally found what I was looking for about six blocks from my house. It was on city land. At first, I thought there would be too much red-tape, but I got in contact with a great guy who couldn't have been more helpful," she says. Once she got the go ahead, getting the tree back to the studio in one piece wasn't easy, but she did and slowly but surely the rest of the pieces began to fall into place as well. "I had to get comfortable with being vulnerable," she says.



**WEB:** The exhibit opens February 26, 2009 at the LA Louver gallery. Look for pictures and video clips documenting the installation process on [www.artworksmagazine.com](http://www.artworksmagazine.com), starting at the end of January.

**IMAGE:** *Satellite* (detail), photo by Michael Underwood, courtesy of LA Louver.