

PAUL VILLINSKI

EMERGENCY RESPONSE STUDIO



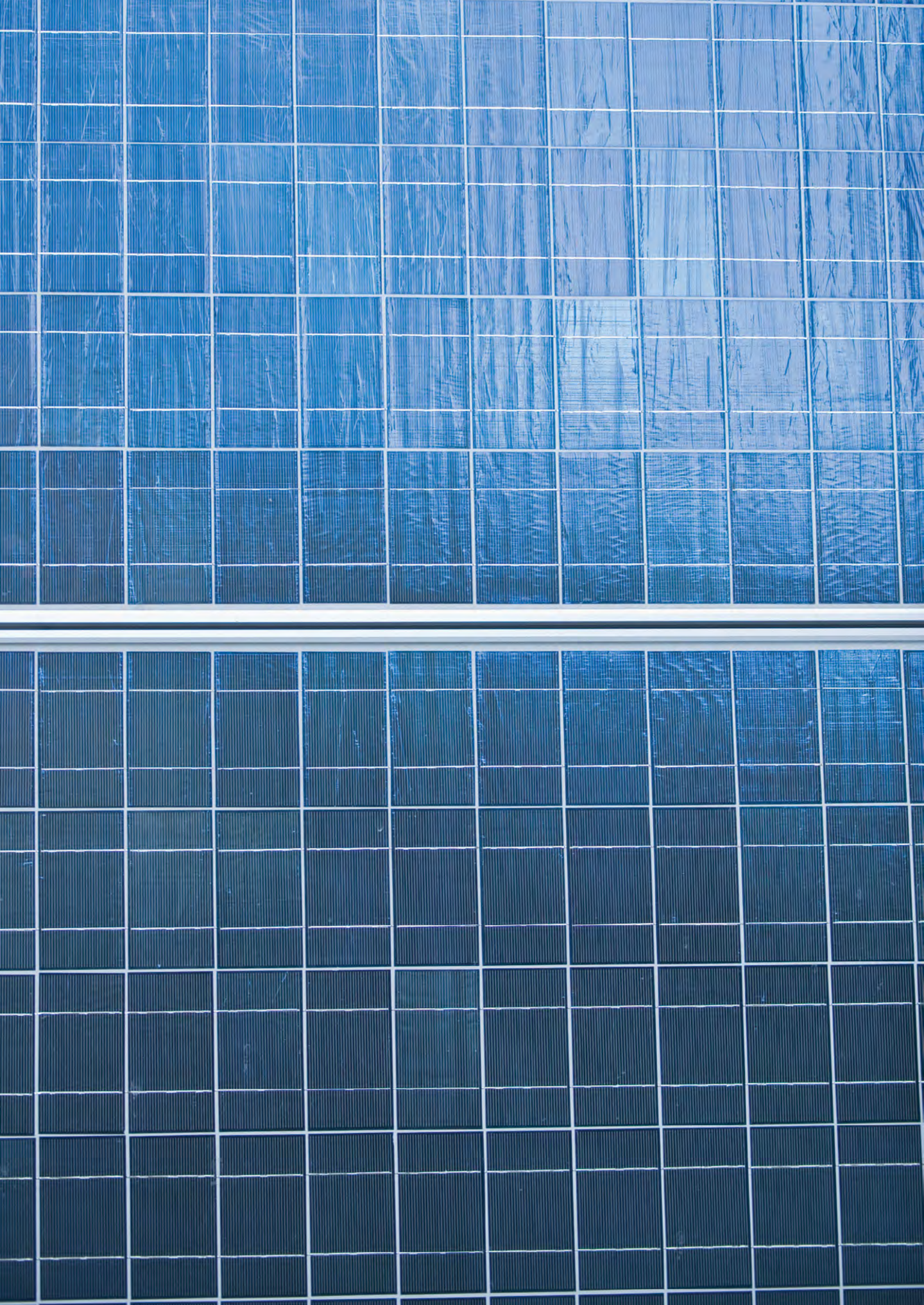


PAUL VILLINSKI

EMERGENCY RESPONSE STUDIO

29 January – 1 March 2009

Rice Gallery
HOUSTON, TEXAS



I met Paul Villinski in October 2008, when Emergency Response Studio [ERS] was on view in the exhibition *Prospect.1 New Orleans*. Parked on a grassy spot in a Ninth Ward neighborhood only a few hundred feet from the Industrial Canal, that in September 2005 had breached the levees and devastated the Lower Ninth Ward, ERS had some of the recognizable features of a conventional trailer, but at the same time it was unlike any mobile home I had ever seen. A portion of one wall folded down opening up the interior to light and air, while inside simple, elegant built-in furniture seemed right out of the pages of a design magazine. In speaking with Paul I learned that his vision to transform a bleak FEMA-style trailer into a self-sufficient studio/home for an artist had fueled six months of backbreaking, non-stop work. Struck by the beauty of ERS in both idea and execution, I invited Paul to bring the Emergency Response Studio to Rice.

Three months later, towed by a large pickup truck, ERS traveled to Houston where it was sited on the Rice campus at the southeast corner of Lovett Hall, the university's oldest and most venerable building. Campus visitors using entrance 1 were greeted by an unexpected sight: the bright white trailer resting on its orange frame, glimmering blue solar panels, a protruding geodesic skylight, and a spinning wind turbine perched atop an aluminum mast. In New Orleans, Paul had flown a City of New Orleans flag from the mast; at Rice, Paul exchanged this flag for a Texas state flag with a large, Rice "R" in place of the traditional five-pointed star. This small but significant gesture established ERS in residence at Rice University.

Foreword

For five weeks, visitors who toured Emergency Response Studio received a crash course in the latest sustainable/"clean tech" solutions to some of our environmental issues. Houstonians, who recently experienced Hurricane Ike and felt firsthand our reliance on the electrical grid, took an immediate interest in ERS' solar-power system. As one visitor wrote in the guestbook, "I know after Hurricane Ike it would have been great to have you in my neighborhood!"

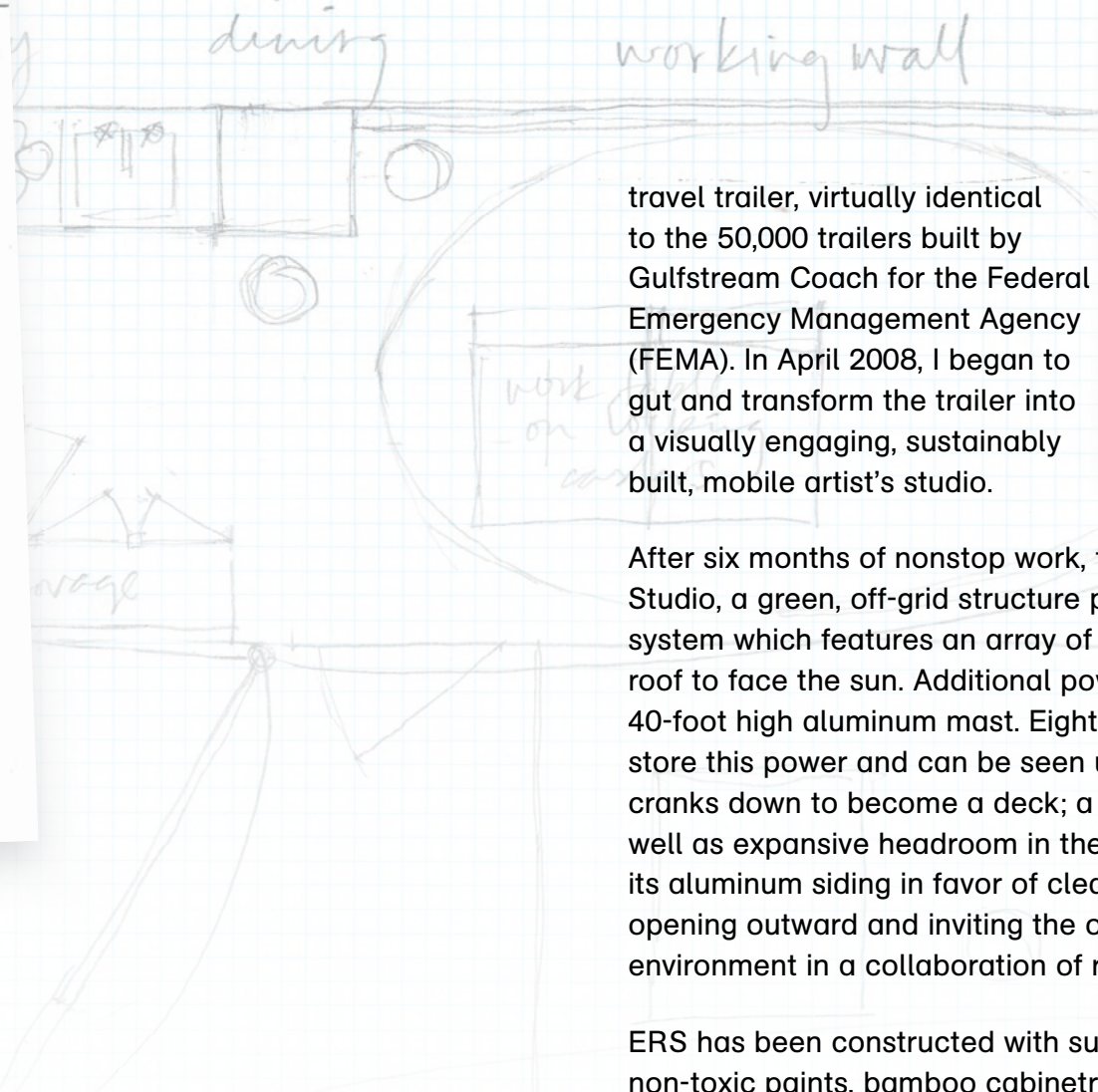
Inside Rice Gallery, Paul created a site-specific installation, *Emergency Response Studio: Process*. Here, visitors could climb steps to enter a full-scale skeleton mock-up of the original FEMA trailer and get a sense of its claustrophobic interior. Throughout the structure strategically placed objects – an apple on the kitchen table, a teddy bear on a bunk bed – suggested each room's function and evoked the presence of the humans who lived in such cramped conditions. Echoing the realistic scale of the mock-up was an enormous photograph Paul took of a Katrina-ravaged house in the Lower Ninth Ward. The mock-up and the photograph recalled the conditions Paul had witnessed there and that had become the inspiration for Emergency Response Studio.

"How can I make it better?" was the simple question Paul asked when he first experienced post-Katrina New Orleans, and he answered it through his artistic vision. I would like to thank Paul for showing us that through creative thinking life can be transformed, not just in the future, but now. We join Paul to ask, "Why not?"

Kimberly Davenport
Director

Gulf Stream Cavalier specs
 "Americanite" ?
 length 27'-11"
 width 20"
 Inter. Height 6'-4" → Total structure
 Ext. Height 11'-6" = 9'-8"
 Dry Weight 4900
 Tires 14" wheels + 8" = 22" tall
 AC = 10" ?

GULFSTREAM CAVALIER (4 models)
 "3BHS"



travel trailer, virtually identical to the 50,000 trailers built by Gulfstream Coach for the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA). In April 2008, I began to gut and transform the trailer into a visually engaging, sustainably built, mobile artist's studio.

After six months of nonstop work, the dilapidated trailer became Emergency Response Studio, a green, off-grid structure powered entirely by a 1.6 kilowatt photovoltaic solar system which features an array of nine large solar panels tilting upward from the trailer's roof to face the sun. Additional power comes from a micro-wind turbine spinning atop a 40-foot high aluminum mast. Eight large batteries, with a total weight of 1,300 pounds, store this power and can be seen underfoot through a clear piece of Lucite. A large wall cranks down to become a deck; a ten-foot geodesic skylight provides natural light as well as expansive headroom in the work area, and a thirteen-foot wall section has shed its aluminum siding in favor of clear polycarbonate sheathing. The structure is expansive, opening outward and inviting the outside in to enable a free exchange between artist and environment in a collaboration of re-invention.

ERS has been constructed with sustainable, green materials – recycled denim insulation, non-toxic paints, bamboo cabinetry, compact fluorescent lighting, reclaimed wood and floor tiles made from linseed oil – minimizing the structure's carbon footprint and enhancing the quality of life for its inhabitants. Though designed as an artist's studio, I hope the project serves as a prototype for self-sufficient, solar-powered mobile housing, and explores the application of sustainable materials in the construction of trailers and other forms of temporary housing.

From November 1, 2008 to January 18, 2009, Emergency Response Studio was on view in the exhibition, *Prospect.1 New Orleans*, the largest biennial of contemporary art ever organized in the United States. Though it was moved to different sites throughout the city during the exhibition, it was first located at the corner of Andry and Douglass streets in New Orleans's Lower Ninth Ward, the neighborhood where I first imagined having a mobile studio in the summer of 2006. The presence of the Emergency Response Studio in New Orleans called attention to the fact, that in many respects, the city remains in a state of emergency. It also suggested that the inventive thinking and non-traditional approach to problem-solving practiced by visual artists can be a valuable part of the mix as we attempt to heal what is damaged and confront challenges of all sorts. The Emergency Response Studio is a physical manifestation of my hope for the future.

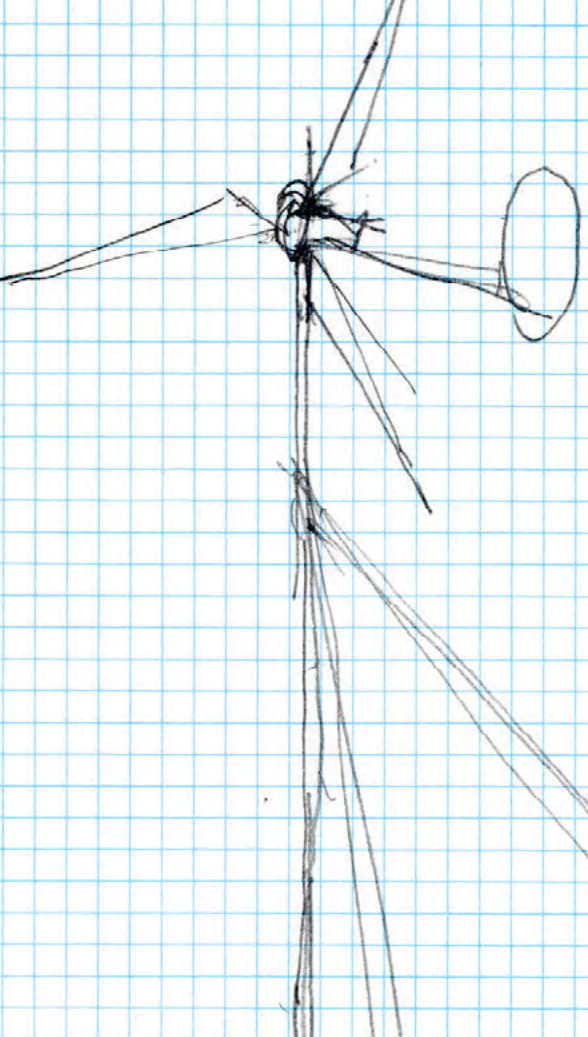


Paul Villinski on Emergency Response Studio

The idea of a self-contained, mobile, live/work artist's studio originated in 2006 while I was preparing for an exhibition at the Jonathan Ferrara Gallery in New Orleans. I wanted to immerse myself in the culture and conditions of the damaged city, and to create work in response to Hurricane Katrina, but to do this I would have had to transport my studio from New York City to New Orleans for a period of several months. What I needed was a mobile structure, and so, the following year, I created Emergency Response Studio. In the tradition of "combat artists" and photojournalists, the ERS could allow artists to "embed" themselves in situations and respond creatively to unfolding events. I believe we ought to deploy artists as part of the mix of disaster workers, medical personnel, NGOs, architects and urban planners – those people charged with responding to, repairing, and re-envisioning post-disaster sites like New Orleans.

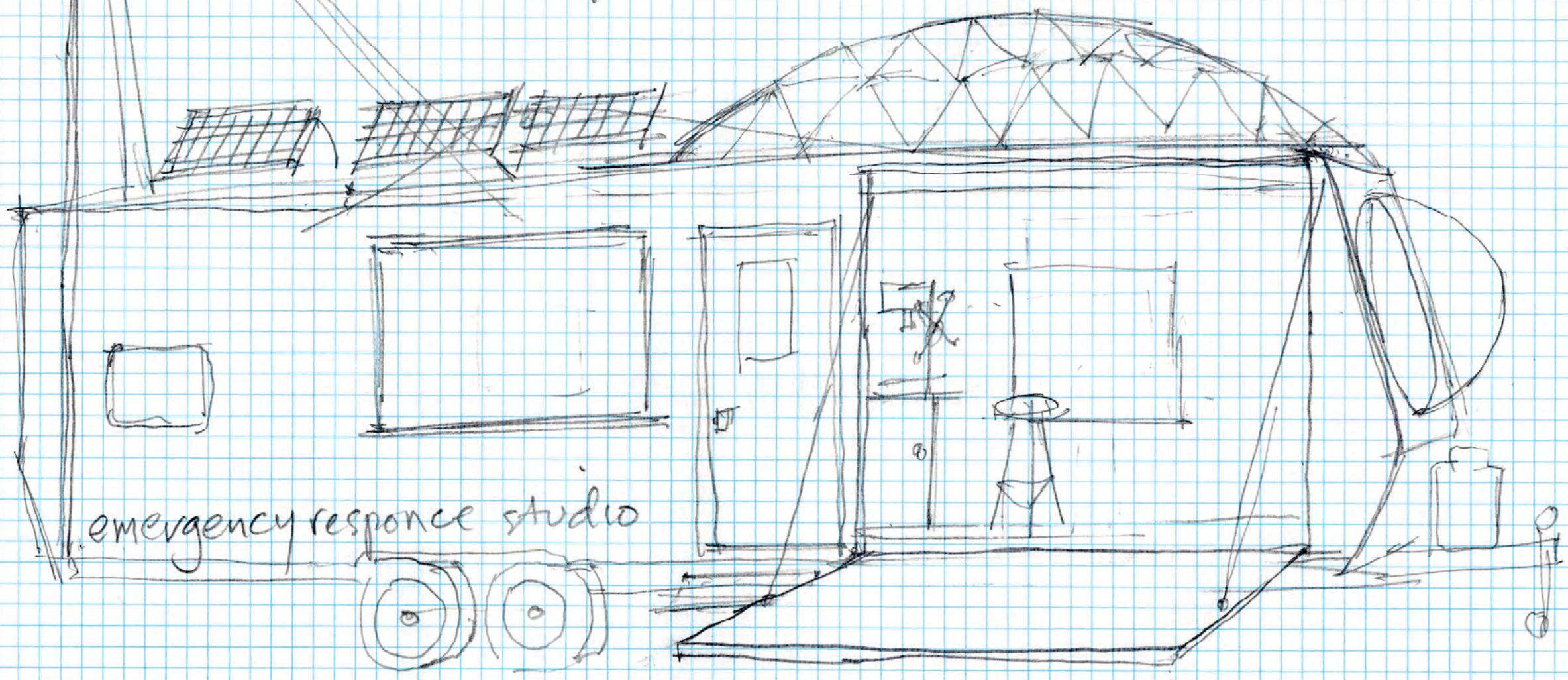
After Hurricane Katrina, the "FEMA Trailer" entered America's collective conscience, unfortunately, with very depressing associations. The unfolding story of these trailers is a cascade of mistakes, from no-bid contracts, to long delays in providing this temporary housing, to off-gassing of urea-formaldehyde in the interiors, and subsequent illnesses and litigation. Emergency Response Studio began as a salvaged, 30' Gulfstream Cavalier

wind turbine



star panels

ellipsoidal geodesic structure



plexi-bubble window

emergency response studio





EMERGENCY RESPONSE STUDIO .ORG





EMERGENCY RESPONSE STUDIO
.ORG















EMERGENCY RESPONSE STUDIO:

Emergency Response Studio: Process, Paul Villinski's installation in Rice Gallery, looked at the ideas, materials, and construction that went into realizing ERS. A photograph Villinski took of a house in New Orleans's Lower Ninth Ward was presented on a side wall as a reminder of the conditions he witnessed there, while a montage of his photographs on the opposite

PROCESS

wall documented the process of creating ERS. A full-scale mock-up of a 30-foot FEMA trailer stood at the center of the installation. Viewers could enter it to experience the confining nature of the trailer's interior space prior to the artist's transformation. At the front of the gallery, a scale model of ERS revealed the artist's initial vision, and a resource table included texts selected by Villinski, as well as samples of the materials used in ERS.







EMERGENCY RESPONSE STUDIO: PROCESS

Resource Table

BOOKS

Architecture for Humanity, ed. *Design Like You Give a Damn: Architectural Responses to Humanitarian Crises*. New York: Metropolis Books, 2006.

Black, Dave. *Living Off the Grid: A Simple Guide to Creating and Maintaining a Self-Reliant Supply of Energy, Water, Shelter, and More*. New York: Skyhorse Publishing, 2008.

Brand, Stewart. *The NEXT Whole Earth Catalog: Access to Tools*. 2nd ed. New York: Random House, 1981.

Dean, Andrew Oppenheimer and Timothy Hursley. *Rural Studio: Samuel Mockbee and an Architecture of Decency*. New York: Princeton Architectural Press, 2002.

Frederick, Matthew. *101 Things I Learned in Architecture School*. Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 2007.

Gordon, J.E. *Structures: Or Why Things Don't Fall Down*. Cambridge, MA: Da Capo Press, 1981.

Hennessey, James and Victor Papanek. *Nomadic Furniture: D-I-Y Projects that are Lightweight and Light on the Environment*. Atglen, PA: Schiffer Books, 2008.

Kahn, Lloyd and Bob Easton, eds. *SHELTER*. 2nd ed. Bolinas, CA: Shelter Publications, 1973.

McDonough, William and Michael Braungart. *Cradle to Cradle: Remaking the Way We Make Things*. New York: North Point Press, 2002.

Mollerup, Per. *Collapsible: The Genius of Space-Saving Design*. San Francisco: Chronicle Books, 2001.

Scardi, Gaibi. *Less: Alternative Living Strategies*. Italy: 5 Continents Editions, 2006.

Schaefer, John. *Real Goods Solar Living Sourcebook: Your Complete Guide to Renewable Energy Technologies and Sustainable Living*. 30th Anniversary ed. Hopland, CA: Gaiam Real Goods, 2008.

Slavid, Ruth. *Micro: Very Small Buildings*. London: Laurence King Publishing Ltd., 2007.

Snyder, Robert. *Buckminster Fuller: An Autobiographical Monologue/Scenario*. New York: St. Martin's Press, 2008.

Steffen, Alex, ed. *World Changing: A User's Guide for the 21st Century*. Foreword by Al Gore. New York: Abrams, 2008.

MAGAZINES

Home Power
Jun/Jul 2003, issue 95
Feb/Mar 2008, issue 123
Apr/May 2008, issue 124
Jun/Jul 2008, issue 125
Aug/Sep 2008, issue 126
Oct/Nov 2008, issue 127

Make: technology on your time
Vol. 5, February 2006
Opened to "Wind Powered Generator" by Abe and Josie Connally, page 90.

Solar Decathlon 2007
September 2007
Printed by US DOE by National Renewable Energy Laboratory (NREL)

PAMPHLETS

Green Depot
– Residential Product Livecard
– UltraTouch Natural Cotton Fiber Insulation
– UltraTouch Bonded Logic
– Forbo Flooring Systems

MATERIALS

2 squares of Bonded Logic UltraTouch Natural Cotton Fiber insulation

1 package containing 2 n:vision 60w 625-mini spiral lamp fluorescent bulbs, soft white

1 square of Roxul AFB mineral wool insulation

1 can of AFM Safecoat PolyureSeal BP water based, satin, wood and floor paint

14 Smith & Fong Plyboo bamboo-based plywood samples

7 Forbo Marmoleum Dual Tile linoleum floor samples (various colors)

1 photovoltaic solar "demonstrator" panel from Evergreen Solar





April 4, 2008: 30' Gulfstream Cavalier trailer purchased from the Federal government's General Service Office (GSO) auction website travels from Smyrna, Delaware.



A scale model of the Emergency Response Studio sits in front of the raw materials.



Everything gutted from the original trailer but the vinyl flooring.

May 15, 2008: Twin-wall polycarbonate replaces the aluminum siding to create a slide-out "sun space."



May 25, 2008: A homemade wind turbine on 28' aluminum flagpole.



June 10, 2008: A hole for the battery box which will house 1,300 lbs of batteries to store the energy from the solar and wind systems.



A Lucite cover, flush with the floor, reveals eight big batteries installed underneath.



A new wall section cranks down to become a deck.

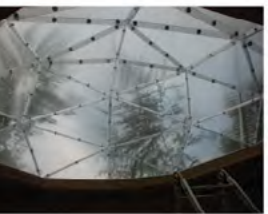


July 25, 2008: Walls braced with sheet metal strips – "Hurricane Bracing" – provide support for the 600 lbs of solar panels that will be installed on the roof and walls.



New 48-volt, production model wind turbine, extended mast, and flag of the city of New Orleans.





New framing to support the geodesic skylight, which will cover the front third of the trailer's roof. Made using twin-wall polycarbonate sheeting used for greenhouses.

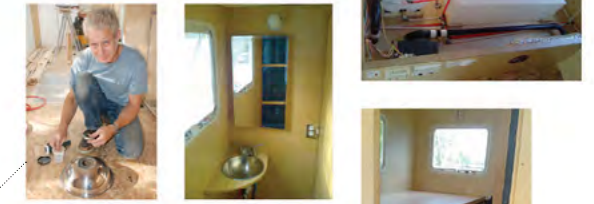


September 6, 2008: Old door on left, new door on right.

September 16, 2008: Replacing the axles, springs, wheels, bearings, brakes, and tires.



Installation of the 1.6 kilowatt photo-voltaic system.



Constructing the bathroom and kitchen.





October 16, 2008:
Installation of the Marmoleum tile flooring, a natural linoleum made from linseed oil pressed from flax seeds.

Sunlight "stored" during the day lights the studio at night.

October 22, 2008:
Folded-up and ready for the 1,300 mile trip to New Orleans's Lower Ninth Ward.

Two-hundred yards from ERS's site are two identical 30' Gulfstream Cavalier trailers supplied by FEMA, which are still occupied by the owners of the adjacent, flood-damaged houses, three years after Katrina.

Paul Villinski in finished studio, next to his band saw and tool chest.

About the Artist

Paul Villinski was born in York, Maine in 1960. He received a BFA with honors from The Cooper Union for the Advancement of Science and Art, New York in 1984. Villinski's work has been exhibited extensively throughout the United States. Recent group exhibitions include *Second Lives: Remixing the Ordinary* (2008), the inaugural exhibition of the Museum of Arts and Design, New York, and *Prospect.1 New Orleans* (2008). Paul Villinski lives and works in New York.



Paul Villinski, *Emergency Response Studio*, 2008
On view at Rice University Art Gallery, 29 January –
1 March 2009, located on the southeast corner of
Lovett Hall, Rice University

Paul Villinski, *Emergency Response Studio: Process*, 2009
Site-specific installation commissioned by Rice University
Art Gallery, 29 January – 1 March 2009

Rice University Art Gallery is located in Sewall Hall on the
campus of Rice University, 6100 Main Street, Houston, Texas
77005, and on the web at ricegallery.org.

Rice Gallery exhibitions and programs receive major
support from Rice Gallery Patrons and Members, The Brown
Foundation, Inc., The Louisa Stude Sarofim 1995 Charitable
Trust, and the Kilgore Endowment. Exhibition catalogues
are funded in part by the Robert J. Card, M.D. and Karol
Kreymer Catalogue Endowment. The gallery receives partial
operating support from the City of Houston and Agnes Gund.
KUHF-FM and Saint Arnold Brewing Company provide in-
kind support.

Paul Villinski wishes to thank the project's sponsors whose
generous support made *Emergency Response Studio*
possible:

Advanced Solar Power Inc., Long Island, NY; Blauen,
Long Island City, NY; The Peter and Carmen Lucia Buck
Foundation, New York, NY; Build It Green! NYC, Astoria, NY;
Anthony Dalo Woodworking, Inc., Brooklyn, NY; Evergreen
Solar, Inc., Marlboro, MA; Jonathan Ferrara Gallery, New
Orleans, LA; Forbo Flooring Systems, Hazelton, PA; Global
Green USA, Santa Monica, CA; Green Depot, Brooklyn, NY;
Greenhouse Capital Partners, Sausalito, CA; GRK Fasteners,
Ontario, Canada; groSolar, White River Junction, VT; Cristina
Hadzi Interiors, New York, NY; Adam Lewis, Aspen, CO;
Morgan Lehman Gallery, New York, NY; OutBack Power
Systems, Arlington, WA; Smith & Fong Co., San Francisco,
CA; Socrates Sculpture Park, Long Island City, NY, and U.S.
Biennial, Inc., New York, NY.

Additional thanks to: Alyson Baker, Anne Bergeron, Matt
Cavanaugh, Eric Fernald, Herbert D. Henig, Jay Lehman,
Anna Marrian, Sally Morgan, Ylva Rouse, Jake Sherwood,
John Truex, and Mark and Jackie Villinski.

Very special thanks to: Dan Cameron, Jonathan Ferrara,
Peter Henig, Robert Mason, David Piotrowski, Gregg Wagner,
and Jeffrey Wolfe.

Emergency Response Studio is courtesy the artist and
Jonathan Ferrara Gallery, New Orleans, and was conceived
as a project for *Prospect.1 New Orleans*.

Photographs by Nash Baker
Copyright © 2009 nashbaker.com:
Front and back cover, inside front cover (end paper), pages
2, 8-9, 10-11, 12-13, 14, 15, 16-17, 18-19, 20-21, 22-23, 24-25,
28-29, 30, 31, 32-33, 36-37, 47

Photographs by Rice Gallery Staff
Copyright © 2009 Rice University Art Gallery:
Inside back cover (end paper)

Photographs and sketches by Paul Villinski
Copyright © Paul Villinski:
Pages 4, 5, 6-7

Photographs and text throughout pages 38-45 were
adapted from Paul Villinski's photographs and captions
documenting the process of creating *Emergency Response
Studio*. This montage was presented as part of the
Emergency Response Studio: Process installation. For
an unabridged slideshow with explanatory captions, visit
www.emergencyresponsestudio.org/images.html

Rice University Art Gallery Staff
Kimberly Davenport, Director
Jaye Anderton, Manager
Joshua Fischer, Assistant Curator
Anna Foret, Outreach Coordinator
David Krueger, Preparator

Design: Antonio Manega, Gazer Design Group
Printing: Masterpiece Litho, Houston, Texas

Copyright © 2009 Rice University Art Gallery, Houston, Texas

ISBN: 1-932281-35-5





Rice Gallery

