

# What Do I Care?

## Part 1

Rebecca Niederlander



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Rio Hondo College Art Gallery  
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Gallery Director: Robert Miller  
Design/Layout: Crystal Maes  
Photography: Steven Burns

## **Vision**

Rio Hondo College strives to be an exemplary California community college, meeting the learning needs of its changing and growing population and developing a state of the art campus to serve future generations.

## **Mission**

Rio Hondo College is committed to the success of its diverse students and communities by providing dynamic educational opportunities and resources that lead to associate degrees, certificates, transfer, career and technical pathways, basic skills proficiency, and lifelong learning.

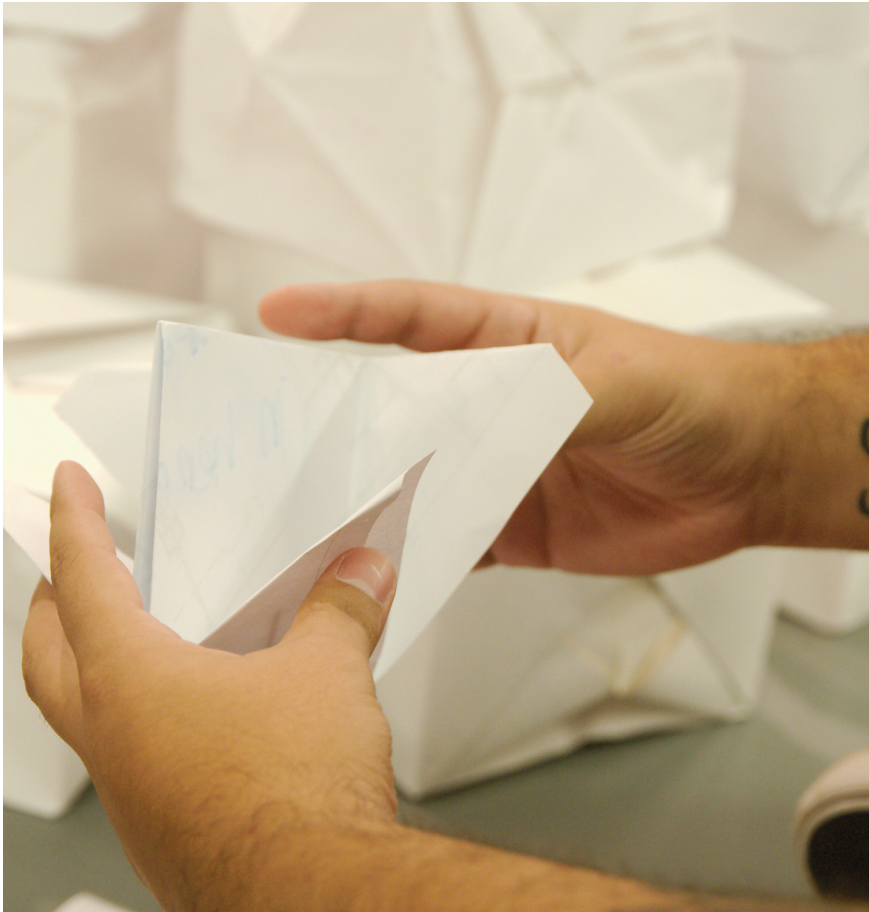
## **Values**

- |                                  |                           |
|----------------------------------|---------------------------|
| 1. Quality Teaching and Learning | 4. Fiscal Responsibility  |
| 2. Student Access and Success    | 5. Integrity and Civility |
| 3. Diversity and Equity          |                           |

RHC Art Gallery hours: M-Th 9am - 3pm and evenings: M-W 6 - 9pm  
Please send submissions or requests to: [robert.miller@riohondo.edu](mailto:robert.miller@riohondo.edu)  
(562)908-3471









PLEASE TAKE A TRIANGLE. WRITE A SECRET IN IT. FOLD A BOX.











### **Rebecca Niederlander: A Field of Secrets**

The practice of art criticism is rarely orchestrated 3,000 miles away and researched via a Facebook page...but even the act of art criticism can be transformed by the work of Rebecca Niederlander. Part mad scientist, part fairy godmother, part intellectual cheerleader, Niederlander transcends art practice. Her ability to engage at a number of community levels is extraordinary.

Niederlander has contemplated the demography of Rio Hondo College and suspects there are many secrets, wishes, and aspirations that come out of the people there. Niederlander would like to honor this activity of secrets. Starting in late September she began the process of writing and urging the college community to write down their secrets on a white piece of paper in the Rio Hondo College Art Gallery. Each secret is then to be folded into a ritualistic origami balloon box that Niederlander has instructed the community on how to make through her presence in the gallery and through the duration of the exhibition.

Niederlander's choice of materials and her attitude toward materials are what most intrigues me. In her earlier work she has interrogated common electrical wire, colored Xerox paper, and vinyl signage paper. This proletariat, hardware store - or better yet office supply store aesthetic - is a practice in itself, but how Niederlander manifests it is remarkable. As if in the hands of Glenda the Good Witch these materials evolve into sparkling and ephemeral devices to protect your dreams and secrets. The schoolyard task of an origami folding project is now the mechanism of social commentary and beauty. This is a rare combination. The materials speak to democracy and community practice that transforms the banal to a pretty, Narnia-like world



of folding forms and color. The effect is as powerful as the multiples of Eva Hesse and more dynamic and hopeful than an Ai Wei Wei protest piece.

Another reading of Niederlander's choice of materials is a feminist one. She has shunned the LA art tradition of anti-beauty, and the high gloss finish of hyper space to investigate how non-artist women make; its the after school projects and the handmade Halloween costumes that bring the artist parent to life. Niederlander's preoccupation with family as a touchstone of creative practice dually informs her making activity. Whether her palette is a palette of a 'tween girl or of a mature woman, in her hands the idea of consumeristic crafts are transformed into a rigorous investigation of space and community self-knowledge.

Niederlander's intent in her practice is to create space that is in the service of the community. In her *We are Stardust. We are Golden. And we have to find our way back to the Garden*, 2013, she investigated the demise of the community poppy bloom, and how due to climate change this event is to be mourned or reinvented. At Rio Hondo College Niederlander makes two spaces: one for the hive-like activity of many people writing the secrets down and manifesting the secrets box, and another where the gallery is empty and the boxes are delicately growing into a field of secrets. Without even being there, I can hear the installation with the rustle of the paper being folded and the silence of the boxes after a group has completed the ritual. The secrets of Rio Hondo are transmitted through the magic of Niederlander's hands.

--- Annie Coggan, 2014



**Rebecca Niederlander's** site-specific sculptural installations are labor-intensive abstractions that use repetition and the inherent ephemeral nature of the materials to address the individual's position within the larger intergenerational community, as well as the micro and macro nature of ego; and in ego's relationship to the necessities of solitude and boredom in the creation of individual thought. Recent projects have included commissioned works for the Los Angeles International Airport and the Trajector Art Fair in Brussels, Belgium. She is also the co-founder of the social practice BROODWORK in which she curates, writes, speaks and designs actions and objects that explore the interweaving of the creative practices and family life—in particular, parenthood. Recent projects include *BROODWORK: It's About Time* at OTIS College of Art and Design exploring the relationship of time to the creative process and family. Niederlander has been written about extensively including the *New York Times* and the *Los Angeles Times*; she is a recipient of numerous grants including the National Endowment for the Arts and the Durfee Foundation. She has an MFA from UCLA and a BFA from California College of the Arts (CCA). She is married with one daughter.