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Artists' Billboards Greet the Genetic Future

New York, August 17, 2000: Creative Time presents a month long exhibition of three publicly-sited artist-designed billboards by **Nancy Burson**, **Alexis Rockman** and **Haluk Akakçe** that starts September 5th. The billboards continue DNAid, a series of public art projects that address the implications of today's genetic research on our futures.

Alexis Rockman has taken on the currently controversial topic of the bioengineering of plant and animal life in his large, cinematic painting of an American farm landscape. Using a series of vignettes within the landscape, Rockman's work, *the Farm*, features a chronological pictorial history of agriculture as it has been transformed by humans. Progressing from the left side of the painting to the right, the artist has depicted what these species used to look like and then visualizes what scientists project for the future—chickens with six wings, square tomatoes, pigs bred for organ transplants. *The Farm* does not take a position on these issues, but intends to provoke awareness of these important issues that are transforming contemporary life. Rockman's billboard is located on the North East corner of Lafayette and Houston Streets. Additionally, Rockman's painting and Burson's *Race Machine* will be part of *Paradise Now: Creating the Genetic Revolution* at Exit Art (Sept. 9 – Oct. 28, 2000) curated by Marvin Heiferman and Carole Kismaric.

Nancy Burson, one of the “inventors” of morphing, has taken five images from the “Human Race Machine” to explore how race is not a genetic fact but rather a political and social construct. This photo-based work features a snapshot of a single woman “evolving” through five different races. Essentially, the same lady has been transformed as a Caucasian, Asian, African American, etc., thereby highlighting commonalities and distinctions between races. Burson's billboard is located on Canal & Church Streets.

The work of Haluk Akakçe, an emerging Turkish artist, shows a double helix as it spirals from the earth to the city skyline. The digital still from his video, *The Measure of All Things*, as he says “portrays the reformation of a new organic relationship between man and nature, man and his universe.” This piece represents a view of the future of paradise and technology. Akakçe's billboard is on the South East corner of Varick & Carmine Streets.

The DNAid series features projects, in an array of media, designed to encourage public awareness and inspire thought and discussion of the important topic of genetic research. The DNAid launched earlier this summer with the deli coffee cup series and continues through 2002. For nearly two years, Creative Time has facilitated engaging discussions between artists and scientists on the issues. The organization has commissioned a number of artists to investigate the subject of genetic research and its impact on our global futures through thought-provoking, highly visible public art projects. Each billboard also invites viewers to visit www.creativetime.org for further information.