SPARTAN WISH LIST

Odds bits in search of a design
It starts here. This woman and her child represent the millions of refugees I have seen all over the world. It also reminds me of my own “flight” from Katrina. It tells me that life is precarious; we all live in the same boat. At any time, one or the other of us can slip overboard. We have to help each other out.
I have always been interested in people who by force or choice lead rootless lives. As a child I was constantly running away from home. I guess in a way, I have been running ever since.
I would like to keep a few metal suitcases near the front door, next to the photograph of the woman refugee and her child. My “valuables” would go in there, family photos (actual and scanned) a few legal documents, an external hard drive, my camera and computer. The suitcases would also hold emergency supplies: batteries, water purification tablets, etc. Stockpile are a luxury most people in the world can’t afford.
In spite this statement on my uneasy relationship with permanence, I want visitors to feel happy and peaceful. I am especially interested in young people, like the Nomads - the group that Evelyn Serrano is working with. I would like to have a sense of security inside a dwelling that is inherently temporary.
I would like the trailer to double as a space for art exhibits. This picture is a trailer in Australia used to exhibit the works of young Aboriginal artists.
Other examples of exhibits: art from the Nomad Lab (pictured: Nomad’s graffitti lab, architecture lab and music beat lab.) Nomad web site: http://vdonomadlab.blogspot.com/
...or an exhibit by photojournalists like Aian Li (left) whose work includes a study of migrant laborers living in trailers.
Another possibility: an exhibit on reimagining the city...(More on creating an exhibition space for the Spartan in slides that follow.)
• I’d like a pot of corn growing outside my front door. Photos: artist Lilia Ramirez and painting by Fabian Debora.
...and this mural of Tonantzin on the outside of the trailer (a real dream)....
The Side Streets project, co-founded by Cal Arts grad Karen Atkinson, uses a FEMA trailer as a mobile community garden. One of their goals is to explore the relationship between art and sustainability. I like the idea of using grey water from the trailer to water food producing plants.

Side Streets: http://sidestreet.org/
A more elegant solution for a trellis was imagined by Tim Pyne, with his M House, a 1,000 square-foot pre-fabricated trailer.

M house:
The architect says the awnings are like eyebrows on a face: they add character.

http://www.m-house.org/
Here are the awnings at work. Carlsbad architect Eric Domeier suggests that leakage into the trailer might be controlled by “another element.” Rather than going crazy trying to seal all the leaks something could be added as a shield. Some adaptation of this may keep rain (water seepage) and the sun (heat) away from the trailer skin.
Solar shade at elementary school, Encinitas, CA.
This raises the question about where the trailer will be housed: in a temporary or permanent setting? My guess is probably a little of both. When Sam is done with the trailer and wants to move on to other things, I will move into it. But it is not highly portable. Although I want to keep the contents light, it will never be easy to move.
Wherever I am, I plan to continue writing about sustainable housing, art and culture in marginal communities. I will probably remain in Southern California, perhaps staying in one place for 3-10 months – or two years. It all depend on my projects. Wherever I am, I’d like the trailer to serve as an art space and a demo model for small, sustainable living. I would also like it to support local culture and art projects.
Maybe I shouldn’t say this, but as long as I have the opportunity and am welcome, I would like to live close to Sam, within an hour or two. I don’t need to see him all the time. Just every few weeks, if only for an hour. I also like to see his performances.
The budget? The money comes from a small inheritance from my mother’s estate. I paid $2,500 for the Spartan + other small expenses getting it in place. What’s left is $16,000. I hope to stretch that with donations in materials. If I can get some donations and/or grants, we can do more.
Back to the M House. I know we have to be realistic, but here are some things I like about this design: It’s mostly white with some black and lightly colored wood. I think that retro linoleum, made from linseed oil could work here.
...it has a few fun features like these light fixtures.
I don’t need a dish washer, oven or microwave, but half a refrigerator is a bit too small. A \( \frac{3}{4} \) size propane refrigerator would do. Don’t need a freezer (energy saving). More photos of refrigerators and other kitchen details in future slides...
The M-House bedroom has a bedroom that is reminiscent of a stateroom on a ship, everything tucked away (except for the bathrobe and that ratty looking thing that must be a teddy bear...)

Video of Tim (and m-house) on Discovery TV
I love this space, the black and the fixtures. I do need a tiny bit of storage. I would like a composting toilet. Small shower can be separate. Maybe put drying rack in there...
A drying rack, next to hot water heater!
Here are some other things I like...This house is one of the winners of the Solar Decathlon. It has a little touch of color and is long and lean. The focus of these designs is sustainable building materials, grey water use, passive heating and cooling. So much to consider – especially for a metal home, a trailer! Link: http://www.solardecathlon.gov/past/2009/gallery_homes.cfm
This is a bedroom in a high end Airstream trailer. A little too much going on for me, especially the TV (which I don’t need). The bedroom needs some storage space (under the bed is good), good reading lights and a place for books. Closets can be in the hall or bedroom. I’d like the bedroom to be my own small, private space. Maybe wood on the floor. The rest of the trailer can be pretty public.
The windows sold me on the Spartan.
I added these photos only to show how wonderful the space is under the front windows. I can’t find better pictures. I’d like a built-in couch that can make up into a bed, with space underneath for perfect for a built-in couch (though not like the one above.) Maybe place for a few plants in the window sill...
This kitchen could work. I don’t need an oven, just burners on top. More slides of that later on.
I went to an RV show for some ideas. It was pretty depressing. I asked the chief salesman if there were any manufacturers making trailers using sustainable building materials. He looked at me like I was a terrorist. He told me that no one had ever asked him that question before. This RV is the big ticket item with a price tag of $400,000.
A number of the RVs had multiple TV’s, including on the outside…

…this one had a full refrigerator and a fireplace!
Back to the task at hand. Here are a few examples of possible useful items such as:

... slides and shades.
and screens
Storage space. The last one is for trash.
I use lots of jars for spices and dried foods. Skinny storage shelves are good, especially if they pull out. I’d rather not have more than one rolw of stuff. The third photo shows a sliding door in bedroom, which I like.
Skinny cabinet in a small space...
This is a cabinet in a corner that makes good use of space (photos of closet door closed and open.)
The one good thing I can say for this monstrosity is that the balcony is great. It let in the outdoors and the breeze felt wonderful, especially compared to all other RVs which were unbelievably claustrophobic.
Details of balcony. I know a balcony is out of the question but I still like it.
This is a more modest effort at a balcony by artist Paul Villinski. He used a FEMA trailer to make an art studio with skylight, solar panels and wind turbine.
Villinski’s (perhaps far-out) idea was to have an off-grid, environmentally responsible art space to work in post-disaster situations. I think this project was around $65,000. Link to You Tube interview with Villinski on Emergency Response Studio. Link: http://il.youtube.com/watch?v=M8uZU82eSzs
Funky tin over windows, seems also to anchor wind turbine

Desk windows seem shaded. Important in Louisiana! Batteries exposed on floor.

Bedroom
Other trailer restorations: kitchens...
Simple stove may be all I need. A covering could go over the stove and sinks, make it one long surface in case of exhibits.
Trailer shower unit in an Airstream.

They prepped the area first.
With a stainless steel shower and toilet, bathroom still has plenty of room to move around.

Other design idea that may be of use....
lighting
I’m not fond of this bedroom except that the bed is situated along the length of the trailer. For some reason that’s pretty important to me. Maybe we could move the bathroom to make a little more space. As for the cabinets, I would rather do without possessions (and the storage space) than have cabinets over my head.
I spend most of the day at my I-Mac. I would like a desk at kitchen counter-top level, along with a way for the computer to disappear and the whole counter along the wall would be free for art or an art lab. I would like one side of the desk to be drawers and the other side to be a file cabinet for A-4 papers. And somewhere three shelves about three feet wide for books and a printer (which I hardly use).
Eco tours: Flying Cloud Airstream

Glass tiles
Eco discovery tours converted an Airstream with an eye to living small and more green...This desk is counter height but I don’t like the cut-out feature or the heavy chairs which don’t seem to movable for an exhibit. The other part that doesn’t work is that I use a desktop most of the time.

Link: http://ecodiscoverytour.com/theflyingcloud.html
This video features foldable furniture. Maybe some ideas for booth table or desk.... http://wimp.com/spacesaving/
Small fan

Double insulated windows
Electrical stuff
Tire storage
Italian light fixture made from end of the day bits (wrong scale but faciful for over the dinette area in front window.)
Things that matter:

1. Simple, uncluttered
2. Healthy
3. An eye towards green building materials
4. Room for displays
5. Bed long ways
6. No batteries under bed or couch
7. Good work space/desk
8. Cozy dining/living room
9. Passive elements to reduce need to heat/cool (insulation, shades, good circulation, cooling elements in floor?)
10. Grey water use
11. Structurally sound
12. That we don’t kill one another off in the process of working on this project.

Things that don’t matter

Oven, microwave, TV, tons of storage space. Finishing in February (as long as I have a heads up).
THANK YOU, MICHAEL!

Any and all help is very much appreciated.