On Saturday, June 12, Dallas artist David McCullough will execute a Baggie sculpture project on and around the Lagoon in Fair Park, sponsored by the Dallas Museum of Fine Arts. The work, entitled, "Baggie Mantra Sanctorum March", consists of large transparent plastic bags filled with water -- both clean and dyed different colors -- and connected by a continuous length of nylon cord. The procession of Baggies will begin on the bank of the Lagoon opposite the Museum, then cross over and continue along the bank on the Museum side, ending at the steps leading from the Lagoon to the Museum entrance.

The piece incorporates elements of painting, sculpture, music and theatre. McCullough conceived the project as a one-act play which will be "performed" during one day's time, the actors being the artist himself and his assistants. In addition, musicians and costumed performers will be on the scene, improvising in response to the action taking place. McCullough considers the work primarily spectacle which involves the viewing but not active participation of an audience. As a visual work of art the Baggie sculpture is essentially lines and forms described on the large area of the Lagoon which in itself is an organic shape.

In terms of color, the natural color of the setting is combined with the colors of the dyes in the Baggies, which McCullough characterized as "packaged watercolors." The piece may also be compared to music, its sequences and intervals relating to the notation on contemporary composers' scores, such as those of John Cage. The music, performed by three members of the Dallas Symphony Orchestra, will, in effect, be played as a "score" composed by McCullough. The musicians will be performing through the generosity of the Musicians Trust Fund, Musicians Union, Local 147.

(More)
The concept of the Mantra is essential to McCullough's art. Of Hindu origin, the mantra is a word sound which is repeated during meditation, each initiate is assigned his own mantra. McCullough believes that the mantra produces spontaneity in ideas and thought after meditation. The resulting integration of thought and being, he feels, is vital to his conceptual process. Ideally, McCullough could then go to a site and execute a work spontaneously, with only the materials to be used decided upon beforehand. In this respect, his ideas are related to Zen creative theories.

McCullough, born in Springfield, Massachusetts, in 1945, studied at the Boston Institute of the Arts, the Aspen (Colo.) School of Contemporary Art and the Kansas City Art Institute (BFA). Before moving to Dallas last November he worked on theatrical events in California with Allan Kaprow and Dick Higgins, both of whom have been extremely influential in the development of the Happening or theatre piece as a visual art form. McCullough also created a "broadcasted sculpture" for the People's Radio Station in Portland, Oregon. In addition to planning conceptual pieces, he is active as a painter and printmaker and has exhibited in several national competitive exhibitions, as the one currently at the Delgado Museum in New Orleans.

"Baggie Mantra Sanctorum March" will begin at 10 a.m. on Saturday, June 12 and continue into that afternoon. The public is encouraged to bring picnic lunches and become a part of Dallas' first Art Happening. The action of the installation will be fully documented on film and its sounds recorded on tape by members of the Tyler Street Factory. The Factory is a co-op of three multi-media artists living and working together to create a collective consciousness in group projects while maintaining an atmosphere of individuality. The Baggie Sculpture will remain on view on the Lagoon for about a week after its completion.