



Neil DeSena, top left, who has been working at the Department of Sanitation for nearly 20 years, drove "The Social Mirror" from its home at the Central Repair Shop in Maspeth — which Mierle Laderman Ukeles, foreground, calls "heaven for artists" because of the glass and steel workshops in a building that's as big as a horizontal Empire State Building. The truck had to be covered for its trip, otherwise the mirrors would disorient drivers.

# One city's trash truck...

## Is installed as art in Pier 94 for annual Armory Show

**AMY ZIMMER**  
amy.zimmer@metro.us



**FAR WEST SIDE.** The first art work for the 2007 Armory Show was installed on Pier 94 yesterday. Rather, it was driven in.

Mierle Laderman Ukeles' "The Social Mirror" had to go in now before gallerists begin to install their booths and works next week. It's a 12-ton, 28-foot-long 1979 Department of Sanitation garbage truck she outfitted with mirrored glass.

"The mirror captures you, but people are afraid to be caught by it," said Ukeles, who has been the unsalaried artist-in-residence at the DOS for 30 years and constructed the piece in 1983. "You're right there, part of the whole

deal. It's about the interrelationship between the people who provide the services and the people that get the services."

Ukeles began to think about garbage, the environment and the invisible workers behind it all in 1969, when she wrote a "Manifesto for Maintenance Art" — an original copy of which will be displayed in the booth set up by the DOS and the Ronald Feldman Gallery.

"I talked about taking care of the individual, the family and the Earth itself," Ukeles explained. "I called it 'Earth maintenance.' In the old days, before the feminist movement, you didn't talk about this; it wasn't considered art."

The booth will feature ele-

### Up next

Ukeles is working with the DOS anthropologist-in-residence, Robin Nagle, on a salt shed being built on Twelfth Avenue between 55th and 57th streets. "The artwork will be about snow," Ukeles said. "Everybody loves sanitation workers when it snows. Sanitation is heroic when it snows."

ments of her past works, such as "Touch Sanitation," where from 1977 to 1980 she followed routes in all five boroughs to shake the hand of each sanitation worker and say, "Thank you for keeping New York alive." At P.S.1 in 1987, she created "Re-entry," a 90-foot sculpture made from 11 tons of recyclables. "I want-

ed to make it like building blocks so you could imagine [these objects] really could have another use," she said. Her "Ceremonial Arch Honoring Service Workers in the New Economy," which was made with 12,000 dirty gloves from sanitation and other workers, graced the World Financial Center in 1988.

As the Fresh Kills Landfill's official artist, she has created several works for the new park, which will be displayed at the booth as well.

"[Ukeles] brings sanitation to life," said Keith Mellis, a DOS spokesman, who plans to bring a contingent of sanitation workers to the show, which runs from Feb. 23-26. "We're hidden in the shadows, but we're out there working every day and she reminds people of that."