

## Leaden Works

### *Attack of the creeping pencils*

By *Rachel Swan*

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The Art Guys — aka Houston-based conceptual artists Michael Galbreth and Jack Massing — can find aesthetic bliss in just about anything, including drugs. What kind of drugs? "The best ones," said Galbreth, explaining that in the past they've made installations from over-the-counter substances like aspirin and Tylenol. They've occasionally used illicit drugs, too, but in a wink-wink-nudge-nudge way — so only people "in the know" would recognize them.

Their latest enterprise comprises about a quadrillion graphite pencils, stuck together with some unnamed substance (not wanting anyone to duplicate their efforts, the Art Guys are coy about certain details). It's a seven-foot tall skyscraper with turrets and prickly spires, slated to appear at **Bedford Gallery's** new exhibition, *Leaded: The Materiality and Metamorphosis of Graphite*. Curated by Elizabeth Schlatter of University of Richmond Museums in Virginia, *Leaded* features elaborate conceptual works that all involve graphite in some form. Some are sculpted out of graphite, while others mix graphite with a different medium and use it like paint. Freakiest of all is Tara Donovan's *Colony*, an amalgamation of 17,000 pencils that spreads across the floor as though it were some kind of bacterial growth, to borrow an analogy from Bedford community arts specialist Ann Trinca. While the pieces vary in size and scope, they all succeed in finding new, tactile qualities in what could be the most elemental tool available to an artist. *Leaded* opens Sunday, October 21 with a reception from 3-5 p.m., and runs through December 22. [BedfordGallery.org](http://BedfordGallery.org)



Pencils are the new Lincoln Logs