

Kim ABELES
Judith F. BACA
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Cheryl Marie DULLABAUN
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Suvan GEER
Pamela GRAU TWENA
Akiko JACKSON
Astrid PRESTON
Lezley SAAR
Susan SILTON
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ECHOES: WOMEN INSPIRED BY NATURE

Curated by Betty Ann Brown and Linda Vallejo, 2007



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ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I would like to thank Betty Ann Brown and Linda Vallejo for bringing their project *Echoes: Women Inspired by Nature* to Orange County Center for Contemporary Art. It was through their talent, devotion and masterful selections that this extraordinary exhibition was formed. This year (2007) has been marked as a tribute year to feminist art. Betty Ann Brown and Linda Vallejo had a vision of creating a show that would not only celebrate women artists in Southern California but also encourage a dialog between the artists themselves. I thank both Betty and Linda for being women of vision and the participating artists who have donated their time and work to this exhibition. A special thanks to Betty Ann Brown, a gifted writer who has documented this project with her insights and vast knowledge of art, and Paula DiMarco who donated her talents giving this catalogue aesthetic form.

Since 1981 Orange County Center for Contemporary Art (OCCCA) has provided emerging and established artists a forum to explore and develop ideas in contemporary art within an atmosphere that promotes experimentation and risk-taking.

Echoes: Women Inspired by Nature was made possible in part by support from: The Puffin Foundation and several other un-named angels.

Most sincere thanks,

Pamela Grau Twena
Director of Exhibitions
OCCCA
2007

ECHOES: WOMEN INSPIRED BY NATURE

by Betty Ann Brown, Ph.D.

“There is a way that nature speaks, that land speaks. Most of the time we are simply not patient enough, quiet enough, to pay attention to the story.”

—Linda Hogan, Chikasaw poet

This exhibition features the work of 21 women who listen to the way that nature speaks and tell remarkable stories about what they hear. In art that ranges from traditional easel painting, to the newer media of photography and computer-generated-imagery, to installations employing “non-art” materials such as feathers and fur and Gummi Bear candies, these artists call our attention to the beauty and wonder of the natural world, and to humanity’s deep and abiding connection with it. They also address issues such as pollution, over-consumption of resources, scientific atrocities and animal abuse.

Rachel Carson, founder of the contemporary environmental movement, has written: “It is a wholesome and necessary thing for us to turn again to the earth and in the contemplation of her beauties to know of wonder and humility.” With everything from sumptuous landscape paintings to horrific digital images of genetic misapplication, the artworks in this exhibition urge us to “turn again to the earth.” They show us the joys and rewards of contemplating nature in the twenty-first century. They also show us its horrors.



Linda Vallejo, *Electric Oaks on the Hillside*, 2007

We don’t need to have seen Al Gore’s authoritative documentary, **An Inconvenient Truth**, to be aware of the severe environmental changes in recent years. On an almost daily basis, television newscasters report on the destructive results of toxic spills, raging fires, rising pollution, or the devastating storms generated by climate fluctuation. Although artists are neither politicians (no matter how politically engaged), nor environmental scientists (no matter how intrigued by the vicissitudes of scientific inquiry), they can and do respond to the state of the natural world around them. In doing so, they can invite dialogue, raise consciousness, and transform culture. By creating captivating images of nature, artists can compel us to view our natural environment with fresh eyes. As Rachel Carson has noted, “The more clearly we can focus our attention on the wonders and realities of the universe about us, the less taste we shall have for destruction.”

The *Echoes* artists respond to nature in three elegantly interconnected ways. They create art that reveals an awe of nature’s beauty and power. They create art that manifests a feeling of meditative oneness with nature (rather than domination over nature or separation from it.) And they create art that mourns the losses from environmental abuse.

IN AWE OF NATURE'S BEAUTY & POWER

“Joy in looking and comprehending is nature’s most beautiful gift.”

—Albert Einstein, German physicist

A resident of Topanga Canyon, **Linda Vallejo** lives and works in a deep ravine lined with California oak trees. Ancient and immense, the trees stand in testimony of nature’s power to endure. Vallejo, who participates in Native American ceremonials, is keenly aware of the sanctity of the oaks. So it is no surprise that her large painting, *Electric Oaks on the Hillside*, is the central focus of her *Prayer for the Earth* installation. Looming above a sacred circle, the large painting unites imagery with spiritual action. *Electric Oaks* combines beauty with expressionist intensity. Its saturated colors and sense of dynamically charged landscape evoke the work of Vincent Van Gogh, who once wrote, “Keep your love of nature, for that is the true way to understand art more and more.” Vallejo would agree.

Like Vallejo, **Astrid Preston** sees beauty and wonder in the natural world of plants. She creates riveting images of trees and flowers that are so finely crafted they astonish the viewer. Preston’s precise execution mimics the sophistication and complexity of biological imperatives. Her densely woven compositions of bushes and vines echo nature’s eternal offerings. As viewers contemplate the lush interlace of Preston’s painted surfaces, the daily rush of physical existence is stopped for a hushed moment of visual pleasure.

Takako Yamaguchi’s radiant paintings recall the decorative elegance of Japanese scrolls and screens—but she replaces traditional Japanese restraint with decorative profusion that borders on the Surreal. A lush red flower floats above a dreamlike seascape in which lily pads become jellyfish, then transform into ferns, and rounded rocks become mountains, then eggs, then abstract patterns. Yamaguchi’s dazzling flowers and foliage are seductive and intriguing. She presents nature heightened by imagination into a gilded fantasy. She engages nature, embellishing its offerings. Her paintings remind us of what French novelist Honore de Balzac once wrote: “What is art? Nature concentrated.”

Miriam Wosk also delights in natural beauty. But, instead of translating her responses to the natural world into the traditional medium of oil on canvas, she translates her visual response into the kitschy materials of today’s popular culture. Her aesthetic of intentional visual redundancy infuses the “non-art” materials with grace. Tacky synthetic substances—from beads to bangles, plastic flowers to fiberglass fish—become sumptuous seascapes. Wosk’s view of the ocean depths is dense, rich, elaborate. And in the end, her ornate surfaces remind us that plastic and rubber—no matter how apparently synthetic—are ultimately derived from natural products. All art is sourced in nature.

Susan Silton’s *Aviate* series is comprised of digital photographs taken from illustrations in bird-watching manuals. The practice of bird watching intrigues the artist for two reasons. First, watching and identifying birds involves a view of nature subject to human control and categorization. Birdwatchers

seek to observe and record as many different birds as possible, in a competitive quest to visually dominate the natural world. And second, the term “bird watching” can be seen as a pun: in many areas, women have been called “birds” and men have been given the social mandate to watch, categorize, and control women. Silton takes illustrations from bird manuals—illustrations intended to facilitate the easy identification and categorization of nature’s creatures—and manipulates them so that they become unrecognizable. In doing so, she creates ethereal images that resist the containment of scientific knowledge. She returns birds to the gorgeous rush of nature’s cycles.

Ceramic artist **Patsy Cox** is intrigued by nature’s beauty and also by its processes. In her *Urban Rebutia* installation, she replicates the shape of a clumping cactus (*genus rebutia*), multiplies the initial shape hundreds of times—just as the living plant itself does when growing in the wild—and distributes piles of the shapes over the gallery floor. Cox uses the three primary colors (yellow, red and blue) for the small ceramic units. The colors are partially inspired by the plants she collects: *rebutia minuscula* is popularly known as “Red Crown Cactus” and several *rebutia* species have yellow flowers. Cox also uses the intense, saturated colors to fill up, even overwhelm, her installation space. Looking at the vividly pigmented piles of biomorphic forms, viewers might recall the experience of looking down from airplane, realizing that we duplicate the natural process of cactus clumping and aggregation as we construct our cities. In Western Society, we have been taught that a bird’s nest is “nature” and a building is “culture.” Patsy Cox urges us to see not just the parallels but also the links between human and natural acts.



Miriam Wosk, *Time, Space, Cosmology and Life*, 2003-05, detail

MEDITATIVE ONENESS WITH NATURE

“One touch of nature makes the whole world kin.” —William Shakespeare, English dramatist

Like Patsy Cox, **Suvan Geer** creates installations that address the processes of nature. Geer’s *Moving in Amber at the Speed of Sound* engages diverse ways of looking at time. The sound of her breath whispering through a turkey whistle, the tree stump suspended above a turning pointer, the floor of fragrant cornmeal—all of these point to our sensate experience of time, or rather, of the suspension of time. In *Moving in Amber*, the body’s time and the cycles of nature converge in a meditation on humankind’s participation in nature, and in time itself. Geer is fascinated by the insubstantiality of time and urges us to remember that so much of what we “know” of time (and of the world) is attained by extrapolating from nature, from our connection with nature.



Cheryl Marie Dullabaun, *Eden*, 2007

Judy F. Baca literalizes our connection with nature in her mural *La Memoria de Nuestra Tierra (The Memory of Our Land)*. Conceived for the airport in Denver, Colorado, *Memoria* depicts the surrounding terrain with Hispanic people, both ancient and modern, physically **inside** the land. Baca spent two years doing in-depth research and extensive dialogue with the Hispanic people of Colorado before she developed the composition. Indeed, the images of people are taken from photographs given her by the local people. The ancestors still walk the paths through the mountains; they are united with the rocks and hills and caves. Their spirits look over us as we, in turn, walk (and fly) through the mountains.

H. Barbara Cutler's *Hiker's Array* is a dress made of paper, fabric, fragments of palm fronds, bark and pods. Her

Bamboo Attire is bamboo, rusty found metal, fabric, and string. Both are conceived of as clothing for women living outdoors, in the wilderness that still exists beyond the reach of urban sprawl. All of Cutler's materials were collected on hikes through the countryside. She has assembled nature's detritus and recycled it into sartorial statements about our connection to the constantly regenerative powers of nature.

Akiko Jackson's *Exponential Growth* is an installation of forty large ceramic mounds scattered across the gallery floor. The forty mounds are full and rounded with slight navel-like protrusions at the top. They resemble swollen bellies and are intended to evoke the forty weeks of gestation during human pregnancy. Encrusted with a rough surface that peels away to reveal a vulnerable inner softness, the belly-mounds are both seductive and repulsive. The pale tones of orange, sage, pink and lavender attract even as the mottled texture repels. Eggs, pods, nipples, wombs, growths, all of these forms have physical and functional affinities, and Jackson's ceramic installation evokes them with poetic allusion.

The titles of **Lezley Saar's** collaged drawings—*Oh, never mind*, *knock-knock jokes stink* and *But Thee a nesit what?*—are taken from her daughter's nonsensical conversations. Both of them combine "found" black and white photographs with Saar's whimsical yet sophisticated ink drawings. The rather anonymous and nondescript photographs are cut into circles and framed by astonishingly fecund images that bulge and drip and coruscate over the surface of the paper. The photographic pods—images made by machines—are encased by bulbs and branches and burrs—the stuff of nature, all made by a woman. Somehow the viewer realizes that these apparently distinct realms are interconnected. Just as she realizes that Saar's daughter's titles have meaning somewhere, in some realm...

Cheryl Ekstrom's *Extreme Unction: Warriors Against Angst* is comprised of six larger-than-life sculptural figures holding ten foot tall lances. Ekstrom began the series soon after the death of her brother. While mourning the loss, she happened to see a deer walk through the landscape below her. The deer stopped and stared at her; that interaction gave her a sense of continued beauty in the world, of our oneness with natural cycles, and our need to press on even in grief. She created the *Warriors* to offer solace, to protect and shield viewers from haunting, negative memories.

Ekstrom's *Warriors* are composite figures with androgynous humanoid bodies and animal heads: one has deer head, another bald eagle head, another a ram head. The City of Laguna Beach chose the deer warrior to reproduce in bronze in Jharaus Park. According to Ekstrom, "It is up against the trees, almost exactly as I saw the deer myself...they set it in a woody area, and you just come upon it, just as the deer came upon me that day in 1997."

Pamela Grau Twena's *Protecting the Seeds* is a sculptural composition of seven large spherical forms that surround small central circular shapes. There is a sense of embrace and assurance, as the spheres seem to shield and safeguard the smaller elements, but the implied safety may be illusory. The spheres appear to be apples that are growing strange tentacles and these tentacles imply mutation into alien life forms.

Grau Twena is troubled by humanity's ongoing disregard for nature and wonders what nature may do in response. The artist writes, "I believe that Nature will try to defend herself. She may become ruthless and blind in her fury. She will mutate or adapt — she will grow horns — she will do whatever she has to in an attempt to protect herself." Everything we do in and to the

natural world is significant. As French mathematician, philosopher and physicist Blaise Pascal asserts, "Nature is an infinite sphere whose center is everywhere and whose circumference is nowhere." He adds, "The least movement is of importance to all nature. The entire ocean is affected by a pebble."

MOURNING THE LOSSES

Cheryl Dullabaun feels the loss of paradise. Her *Eden* installation puts that feeling into physical form. She begins with verdant abundance—the promise of paradise—embodied in narcissus bulbs that grow, sending white roots below their brown bodies, and velvety green leaves with stiff stalks of fragrant flowers shooting above them. But all of the apparent abundance is constrained: the bulbs are contained in small glass bottles, like scientific specimens. And some are dying, even as the exhibition opens. On the walls around the bottled bulbs are more images of containment and death. Three photographs of the grisly remains of buffalo hunts, two from the nineteenth century, one from the early twentieth century, are framed on canvases that have been shot, then veiled in glossy, blood-red pigment. Also boxed and framed are long black feathers, so many you can't imagine the bird(s) surviving their removal. And there is pale white fur, no doubt taken from deceased mammals.

Dullabaun asks what we have done to the paradise of nature. Have we rejected her offers? Worse, have we slaughtered her children? Is there naught but loss? Yet even as she asks, Dullabaun clothes her questions in such beauty that we know, somehow (perhaps instinctively?), that nature's promise endures.

Cheri Gaulke is a performance artist, writer, videographer, teacher, public artist, sculptor, and creator of artists' books. For

Echoes, Gaulke has created two books that are both related to other aspects of her oeuvre. *The Los Angeles: River Inside a River* is based on a 1989 video project she did with Wilson High School students (and their teacher Susan Boyle) that merges an historical timeline with historical images of the river. *Frogskin* is a book derived from an early (1991) video installation and an even earlier performance. All were developed from a fairy tale about a prince turned into a frog, merged with the artist's environmental concern about the loss of numerous frog species (and how such losses point to the disappearance of frog environments like rain forests).

Kim Abeles' *Presidential Commemorative Smog Plates* are central monuments in the history of California environmental art. Originally created in the early 1990s, Abeles' *Smog Plates* have been widely acclaimed as potent testimony to governmental disdain about pollution. The artist created stencils of presidential portraits and placed them over simple glass plates. Then she left the plates on the roof of her downtown Los Angeles studio, allowing the local smog to deposit dirt and grit on the plates for varying lengths of time "depending on the extent of [the president's] violation or apathy toward the distressed environment." After the smog-infused portraits were completed, Abeles added statements the presidents had made about the environment. Smart and visually powerful, the *Presidential Commemorative Smog Plates* are only one in the ongoing series of ecologically attuned works that Abeles has produced.

Yaya Chou came to her unusual art material—Gummi Bear candies—through concerns about food safety. She realized that children are attracted to the bright colors and sweet taste of Gummi Bear candies, but discovered that they are full of toxic food coloring (derived from petroleum products) and so much sugar

that they cause hyperactivity. For her sculpture *Joy Coated*, Chou covered a baby mannequin with the candies, hoping to expose the fact that so many kids eat such bad food. She melted some of the Bears so they would drip off the mannequin's hands, and soon realized her studio was being filled with poisonous fumes. She got a horrible headache and her cat threw up.

Her work on the Gummi Bear *Chandelier* was not as dramatic, but she did find that, as she pierced each Gummi Bear with a needle in order to hang it on the light fixture, the candy stuck to her needles, her fingers, her clothes. Chou's art asks: Why are these artificially flavored and colored products so widely present and persistent? What are they doing to us?

Linda Frost asks not what our synthetic products are doing to us, but what we are doing to ourselves. She makes this interrogation by exploring the abuses of genetic research and manipulation. The horrors of scientific hubris stare out at us from her Petri dishes and test subjects. Although animals share the vast majority of humanity's genetic make-up, Western Culture has positioned man as dominant and the animal world as separate and subordinate. As a result, most scientists feel little or no remorse about torturing and killing animals in the process of an experiment. As Nobel Laureate physicist Murray Gell-Mann reminds us, "Today the network of relationships linking the human race to itself and to the rest of the biosphere is so complex that all aspects affect all others to an extraordinary degree."

Ardent environmentalist **Rabyn Blake** considers her art a kind of requiem for nature. She creates fragile boats—their shapes based on Ancient Egyptian boats for the dead—in order to evoke a nostalgic sense of loss. Blake's boats are piloted by tiny, often passive, human figures. Convinced that our current state of expulsion from paradise mandates a new direction,

the artist advocates for an interactive approach, one that allows our destination in line with nature's processes. Blake observes that where there is passivity, nature rules; she also believes in redemption and reclamation. She quotes American poet Philip Booth, who wrote,

"I strongly feel that every poem, every work of art, everything that is well made, well said, generously given, adds to our chances of survival by making the world and our lives more habitable."

Samantha Fields remembers looking out her California State University Northridge office window one afternoon and seeing fire rage over the mountains that line the north rim of the San Fernando Valley. The wind turned and suddenly the air on campus was thick and black and smelled horrible. A few minutes later, they closed the campus and sent everyone home. The air was so toxic that it was a health threat. Students and faculty with asthma literally could not breathe. From that experience came her stunning painting of hell in Southern California entitled *In the Belly of the Beast*. Spectacularly beautiful but deeply troubling, Fields' painting combines the Romantic tradition of American landscape painting with contemporary environmental concern. We are seduced by her lush surfaces, but distressed by their content.

Holly Tempo is concerned about the accelerating destruction of the tropical rain forests. Her *Recycled Image: Chasing Arrows at Las Orchiedas* is comprised of images generated in the rain forest of Panama during the summer of 2005. The artist created an icon of three arrows bending into a circle or "chasing" each other, then stenciled the icon on coconut trees throughout the Las Orchiedas jungle. She

photographed the results and created an installation grid of the images. Although the icons have now disappeared, "signaling the fragile regeneration of this ecosystem," the photographic documentation is an "insistent reminder" of nature's delicate balance.

The *Echoes* artists listen to nature and tell of the stories they have heard. Some of the stories glory in nature's beauty and power. Others bemoan our ongoing abuse of nature. But all of them acknowledge our oneness with nature and our desperate need to respect and love her.

All of the artists would agree with Canadian social scientist Ernest Becker, who has written, "When we understand that [wo]man is the only animal who must create meaning, who must open a wedge into neutral nature, we already understand the essence of love. Love is the problem of an animal who must find life, create a dialogue with nature in order to experience [her/]his own being."

Betty Ann Brown, Ph.D., Pasadena, March 2007

KIM ABELES

Kim Abeles is an artist who crosses disciplines and media to explore and map the urban environment and chronicle broad social issues. The *Smog Collector* series brought her work to national and international attention in the art world, and mainstream sources such as Newsweek, National Public Radio, and CBS Evening News with Dan Rather. Abeles' mid-career survey, Encyclopedia Persona A-Z, toured the United States and South America, and was awarded the Best Regional Museum Show category for 1993-94 by the International Association of Art Critics. She represented the U. S. in both the Fotografie Biennale Rotterdam and the Cultural Centre of Berchem in Antwerp. Her work is in the collections of the Museum of Contemporary Art, the United States Information Agency, Los Angeles County Museum of Art, and is achieved in the library collections of the Museum of Modern Art and the Cooper-Hewitt Publication Design Collection of the Smithsonian. Abeles was awarded grants from the Andy Warhol Foundation and Peter Norton Foundation and fellowships from the J. Paul Getty Trust Fund for the Visual Arts, Pollock-Krasner Foundation, and the California Arts Council.

Artist Statement

Presidential Commemorative Smog Plates are portraits of U.S. Presidents from McKinley to Bush created from particulate matter in the polluted air. The cut stencils on dinnerplates were placed on my rooftop for varying lengths of time depending on the extent of their violation or apathy toward the distressed environment. Upon removal of the stencil, the Presidents' visages in smog were revealed, accompanied by their historical quotes about the environment and business.

McKinley became the appropriate starting point because his presidency occurred when two automotive factories were running full production in Detroit, thus marking a lifestyle and transportation mode which currently causes 70% of our air pollution. Apathy and ignorance mark Reagan, Bush and Taft as the darkest smog collections. Ronald Reagan was notorious for his erroneous comments about the environment and apparently couldn't decide if problems existed. George Bush views himself as "The Environmental President," yet holds a contradictory record of effort and global cooperation. William Taft vowed to follow in the relatively pro-environmental footsteps of Theodore Roosevelt, but nestled in the hands of big business shortly after his election.

Dwight Eisenhower reflects the 50s enthusiasm for industrial progress, that era when factory emissions were idealized as pink puffy cumulous clouds from smokestacks. In January 1970, Richard Nixon's dramatic speech about restoring the environment was designed as a distraction from unrest on college campuses. Lyndon Johnson's attitude, indicative of many of our leaders, heralds "baring the secrets of nature," but fails to grip the meaning of his gesture that "the next [wo]man to stand here will look out on a scene that is different from our own."

The United States has never had a President combining strength with insight to lead an energetic movement to restore our natural resources. However, both Roosevelts and James Carter made efforts toward a better environment. Consequently, though portrayed in smog, they appear with the palest pollution.



PRESIDENTIAL COMMEMORATIVE SMOG PLATES , 1993
Mixed media installation

JUDY BACA

Judy Baca has spent 30 years working to address social justice issues for ethnic neighborhoods and the working poor through public art monuments. Her commitment to the public interactive process led her to develop the first Los Angeles City mural program. In 1976, she founded the Social and Public Art Resource Center (SPARC). She is best known for *The Great Wall of Los Angeles*, a landmark pictorial representation of the history of ethnic peoples of California located in the Tujunga Wash. Her international collaborations created *The World Wall: A Vision of the Future Without Fear*, which continues to travel and expand. Recently, she has explored the concept of land having memory in works entitled *La Memoria de Nuestra Tierra (Our Land Has Memory)* which attempt to spiritually reclaim land illegally acquired from Hispanos and indigenous peoples of the Southwest. She is a UCLA Professor of Fine Arts, Vice Chair of the Cesar Chavez Center and Professor of Art for World Arts and Cultures.

Artist Statement

As a visual artist, I have been involved in every aspect of the production of large-scale wall paintings and public art projects over the last 25 years, from funding to technical development, to preservation, to the advancement and expansion of the art form to international collaboration and portability.

While muralism was vital to the Chicano movimiento and the development of Chicano art, the form has moved widely to diverse populations particularly here in Los Angeles where the center of mural activity occurs on an international basis. Where my work diverges from other mural applications is in its conceptual organizing and performance base processes for community inclusion in image development. It is my intention to create conceptual connections between diverse people by putting them to the common task of defining themselves within a dominant culture. When viewed as a public organizing art work rather than architectural decoration, the murals become symbols of a struggle of people against boundaries, cultural differences, and defined territories.

I have concentrated on using the creative process through group imaging techniques and community research associated with the production of works of monumental scale to develop models for the transformation of both physical and social environments.



LA MEMORIA DE NUESTRA TIERRA, COLORADO, 2000, DETAIL

Aluminum foil print from original acrylic on canvas



RABYN BLAKE

Rabyn Blake was born in Newport News, Virginia. She moved to California after graduating from Longwood College in Farmville, Virginia, to study French Literature at Claremont Graduate School. She received an M.F.A. in Intermedia and Sculpture from Otis Art Institute, Los Angeles. She resides in Topanga Canyon with her husband Eli Sercarz and two neighboring sons' families. She is a community activist and founder of Santa Monica Mountains Coalition for the Alternatives to Toxics (SCAT). Exhibitions include the Brand Art Center, Los Angeles Institute of Contemporary Art, the Woman's Building, California State University at Los Angeles, Long Beach Museum of Art, and the Mermaid Tavern; Shidoni Gallery, Saint John's College, Santa Fe, New Mexico; the Anthology Film Archives, New York; Galerie GNG, Paris. Her video work is in the permanent collection of the Anthology Film Archives and the Long Beach Museum of Art (now acquired by the Getty Museum).

Artist Statement

The embarkation series was begun in response to a local environmental issue surrounding trees. As I situated the miniature porcelain figures into settings of natural materials, contexts emerged evoking layers of myth, poetry or science.

Beneath the tableaux lie teasing questions: are these Lilliputians doomed castaways or voyagers? *One Life* carries a bound man and his pregnant mate into uncharted waters. I confess to a pervasive sense of loss—expulsion from Paradise being the mood—as I was making them, echoes of nature sounding a requiem. Do we all vacillate between optimism and despair where the earth's fate lies?

Today, this day I also see them as voyagers. Recalling Eliot, they reveal their god-like potential as heroes on a quest, a journey, a voyage, who must encounter impossible odds, tasks.

"We cannot think of a time that is oceanless
Or of an ocean not littered with wastage"

The artist experiences creation flowing, sometimes wrested, from her imagination. Will we act upon divine inspiration from that great source—the human imagination—and attract forces to rescue the earth? There is finite time for accomplishing this work as we glide to the final destination like the youth on his soul boat, *The Crossing*.

"We shall not cease from exploration
and the end of all our exploring
Will be to arrive where we started
And to know the place for the first time."

ONE LIFE, 2001
Porcelain, bark, paper



YAYA CHO

Born and raised in Taiwan, Yaya Chou moved to Los Angeles in 1997 to study Experimental Animation. Then, inspired by scene and set design for clay animation, the award-winning filmmaker turned to sculpture and installation. Today she is a self-taught visual artist who works in a variety of media. Yaya Chou's works combine humor and commentary on modern lifestyles; they are inspired by language, melody and social phenomenon like consumerism. Often, she investigates cultural assumptions about what is natural and what is unnatural. Chou is currently showing with galleries and in juried shows in Los Angeles, Chicago, Minneapolis, U.K. and Taipei, Taiwan. Her films were screened in numerous international film festivals and venues, including Museum of Modern Art, New York. Her visual art works are featured in *Fiberarts Magazine*, books and newspapers in both the U.S. and Taiwan.

CHANDELIER, 2005

Gummi bears, beads, monofilament, wire, plastic and light

Artist Statement

To tell a story is to reinforce one's ideology. From making films to creating art, this principle plays an important role in my works.

Throughout my training in film, I cultivated a passion for inventing and rearranging symbols in order to tell stories. I am interested in utilizing familiar objects or images to depict the dichotomy found inside highly developed societies. Elements from nature, animals and plants often appear in my work, because they create an invisible tension or distance from our modern lifestyles.

The series of Gummi Bear sculptures originated from my concern about food safety. The bright colors and soft textures of children's snacks pose an overly romantic picture that draws my attention to the dangerous ingredient inside them. Artificial food colorings and flavors have been proven to cause nerve damage and reproductive disorder on animals, as well as developmental problem and hyperactivity in children, yet these toxic ingredients are still used to attract (young) consumers. By constructing a household scenario with the embellished snacks, I wish to pose the questions: Who consumes these foods? Who has the choice to choose?

Over the years, I have worked with a variety of materials, applying craft supplies and found objects to paintings or creating sculptures with foods and fabrics. I intend to evoke particular meanings related to the viewers' experiences of such materials. My focus is on the experience created when the viewer encounters the work, rather than a fixed or predetermined concept.

PATSY COX

Patsy Cox was born in 1973 in Ubon Ratchatani, Thailand. She received her Bachelor of Fine Arts in Graphic Design and Ceramics from Missouri State University and her Master of Fine Arts in Ceramics and Sculpture from the University of Delaware. Patsy has exhibited both nationally and internationally. She was a Getty Scholar Linking Service Learning and the Visual Arts and has served on the board of The National Council for the Education of Ceramic Art as a Director at Large. She is currently an Associate Professor of Art at California State University, Northridge, where she is serving as Associate Chair of the Art Department. She maintains a productive studio space in Los Angeles, California.

Artist Statement

My work is derived from science, culture, the natural world and urban sprawl. I am concerned with ideas of influence and assimilation.

My most current work embodies mutations, hybrids, growth, and cross-pollination inspired by nature. Multiple forms can stand as individual pieces and also parts of a cohesive whole. When the pieces are grouped together, it's not clear where one begins and the next one ends, which is the original and which is the mutation.

While most of my work does not refer to a particular geographical location, my most recent projects have grown out of my own relationship to Los Angeles-its communities; its sheer mass; its blending of boundaries; its mixtures of language and culture. My installations focus on capturing the overwhelming nature of a sprawling city and often use the primary colors of blue, yellow and red to emphasize the possibility of its transformation-all colors are possible from the mixture.

URBAN REBUTIA, 2006
Clay and Engobe



H. BARBARA CUTLER

H. Barbara Cutler was born and raised in Los Angeles. She received her BA and MA in Art from California State University, Northridge, and went on to teach drawing, painting and printmaking at both the high school and community college levels. She has exhibited her work throughout Southern California, at venues ranging from the University of Southern California to the Finegood Gallery, Bernard Milken Jewish Community Center

Cutler was on the board of the Women's Building. During her long membership in the Southern California Women's Caucus for Art, she has served as both vice-president and publicity chair. Cutler has also been an active member of the Los Angeles Printmaking Society. Now retired from teaching, H. Barbara Cutler continues to be an active artist.

Artist Statement

I seek to merge art, nature and my feminist identity in my series of "Art Dresses." While dresses usually hang on the body, these dresses hang on walls and become art. The "Art Dresses" are abstractions of reality that echo the contours of wearable attire. They are composed of nature's detritus—fallen leaves, dried pods, broken branches—and discarded, often rusted metallic, materials that I collect in my garden or encounter on my walks.

I merge the organic and inorganic in these artworks to transform nature and challenge our traditional ideas about the natural world. Further, by recycling and transforming found objects and natural materials, I am attempting to evoke an emotional response and to awaken new associations about life and matter."



HIKER'S ARRAY, 2007
paper, twigs, pods, string, fabric

CHERYL MARIE DULLABAUN

Cheryl Marie Dullabaun was born and lived much of her life in the Midwest. She moved to Southern California in 1990 and received her MFA from The Claremont Graduate University. Her work has been exhibited in Southern California, Chicago, and the Czech Republic. She also teaches art and art history at the California State University at Northridge.

Artist Statement

I long for Eden.

I am fascinated by the story of Adam and Eve living in a Garden filled with abundant flora and fauna, being given the privilege of naming every animal, being able to communicate with them. A life in harmony with all creation.

I long for the peace and beauty of Eden.

I am saddened to learn of ecological loss either past or present. I was born in Ohio. At one time it was covered in forest, now it is farmland, track housing and malls. My children live in Chicago. Their city sits on the edge of what was once an ocean of prairie. Now what little remains grows behind fences. I reside in Redlands, historically abundant in orange groves; they are being cleared at an alarming rate. The result is animals and birds are disappearing from the environment.

Today many of nature's species can only be seen stuffed, bottled or pinned to boards in Natural History Museums. We plunder, consume and waste nature and wonder why all we have left are remnants.

Fragments and specimens...this is what remains of Eden.

Biblical scholars believe that *Eden* was located in present day Iraq. The current conflict has had a devastating effect on human life and the ecology of a place once called "Paradise".

My installation, *Eden* is a way to acknowledge our disconnect with nature, our expulsion from the Garden. It is my hope that someday we will be able to return to *Eden*.



EDEN, 2007
Mixed media installation, 3 details



CHERYL EKSTROM

Born a middle child in a small town, Beaver Falls, Pennsylvania, Cheryl Ekstrom felt loved but often isolated and ignored. Today, she claims that it was the best thing that could have happened to her, because it left her time to explore her surroundings and investigate the unknown. She remembers, "I lived with my imagination and mythology, which has always triumphed over conjuncture." Now residing in Laguna Beach, California, the artist proclaims, "Being left alone in my studio to create is the next best thing to sensing God." Ekstrom remains an explorer, seeking and discovering new ideas. She considers creativity to be her greatest gift and the mechanism that allows her art to flourish and grow.

Artist Statement

Extreme Unction: Warriors Against Angst represents the haunting voices from the past and our ability to press on. The art was first set into motion by a personal tragedy. Realizing that the pain she felt was shared by many, the artist began to create the powerful and imposing figures that would not only heal her angst, but have the same effect on those who saw them.

The *Warriors* are intended to protect us from the painful memories that interfere with our lives. Their shields serve to deflect the haunting memories that echo from our past and come to us when we least expect them.

The *Warriors* were created as reminders that each of us has the innate strength to overcome and press on. They were first installed in the Moulton Meadows Hills in 1997. In preparation, Ekstrom recalled people who had said painful things to her in the past. She scripted the painful statements and invited the original people to her studio, to read their comments into a microphone. Their taped voices were played on speakers buried in the ground around the *Warriors*. The sounds came up like lingering memories echoing from the past.

Over 1,000 people came to view Ekstrom's *Extreme Unction: Warriors Against Angst* installation. Some even spending the night. Ten years later, Ekstrom is still receiving letters, testimonials, and photographs from people who were impacted by her work.

EXTREME UNCTION: WARRIORS AGAINST ANGST, 1997

6 mixed media figures: plaster, clay, found objects





IN THE BELLY OF THE BEAST , 2006
ACRYLIC ON CANVAS

SAMANTHA FIELDS

Samantha Fields was born in 1972 in Cleveland, Ohio. She received her BFA from the Cleveland Institute of Art in 1995, and her MFA from Cranbrook Academy of Art in 1998. In 1998, she was awarded the College Art Association's prestigious Professional Development Fellowship, a program designed to place emerging educators into college level teaching positions. The fellowship brought her to Los Angeles for a teaching position at California State University, Northridge, where she is currently an Associate Professor of Art.

Her recent work deals with environmental disaster brought on by global warming. She has exhibited work nationally and internationally with exhibitions at The Jones Center for Contemporary Art in Austin, Lemberg Gallery in Detroit, The Armory Center for the Arts in Pasadena, Galerie Engholm Engelhorn in Vienna, and Kim Light Gallery in Culver City. She lives in Los Angeles and is represented by Kim Light Gallery in Culver City.

Artist Statement

In 2003, a conflagration of over 10 fires burned more than 768,00 acres of land, an area nearly the size of Rhode Island. At least 22 people were killed and over 4,800 structures were destroyed. The fires stretched over 200 miles...from the US/Mexico Border to the Northwest suburbs of Los Angeles, where I was standing on a worktable, watching the fireline advance towards the 5 freeway. I had never seen a fireline before, and it was a terrifying, yet strangely hypnotic sight.

According to the government, 2006 has been the worst fire season since record keeping began in 1960. So far, 84,771 fires have burned 9,125,715 acres of land. Over 162,700 acres can be chalked up this years Day Fire, the largest single fire yet.

We live in a region that burns, plain and simple. It is part of the natural process of our environment. The suppression of natural fires due to overdevelopment is exacerbated by the alternating torrential rains and prolonged droughts brought on by global warming. Since the natural fire cycle is nearly impossible to restore due to the ever-expanding sprawl of Los Angeles, it seems that the fires will only get worse. We, as residents of this region, are living in the belly of the beast. Driving along the freeway, surrounded by hills topped with glowing fire, it's hard to imagine Hell looking any different (*Fire stats can be found at: www.fire.ca.gov*).

LINDA FROST

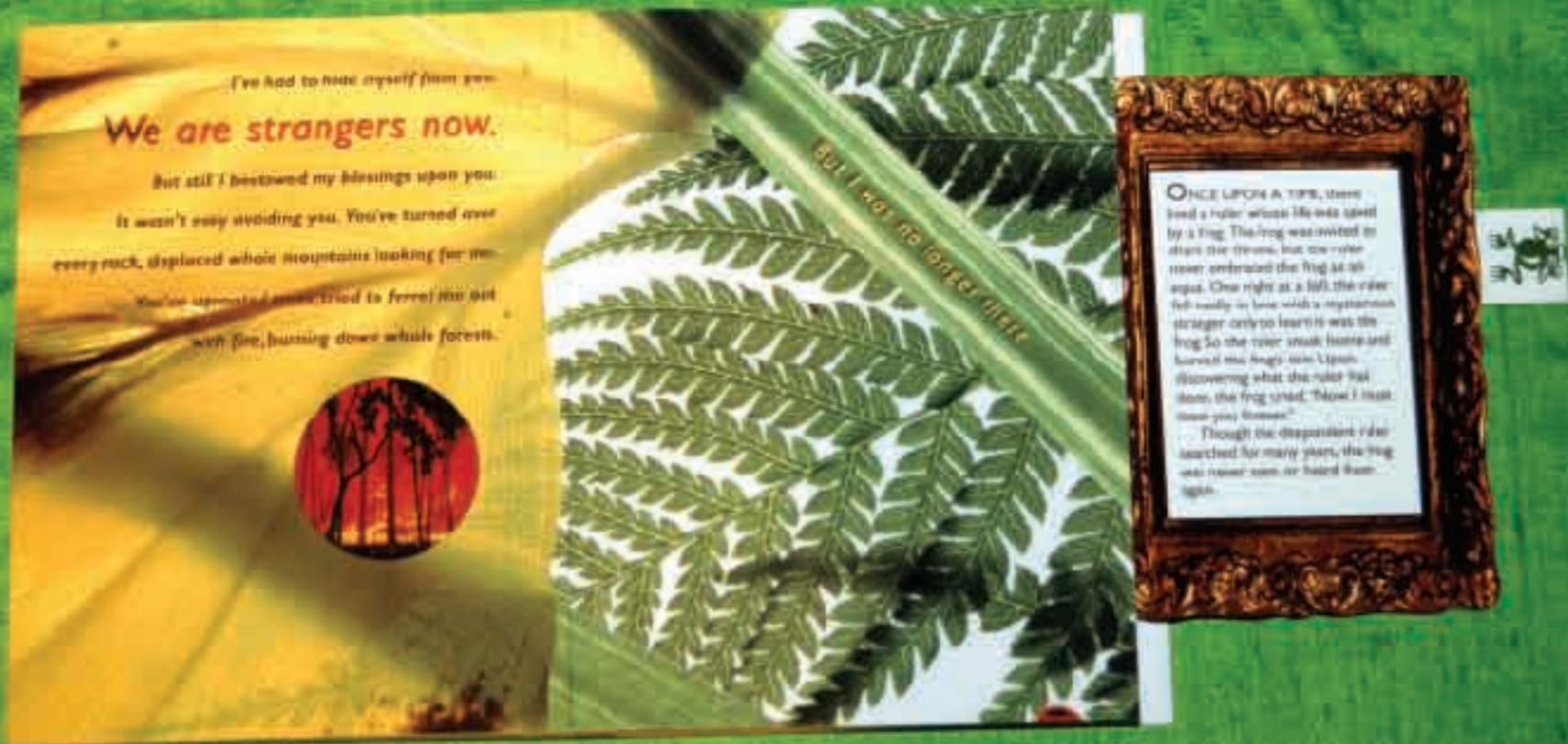
I was raised in rural Northwestern Pennsylvania, surrounded by the untamed beauty of nature and wildlife. St. Mary's was famous for its hunting; and at eight years old, I witnessed the horror of a freshly killed deer – stomach split and dripping blood – hanging from the neighbor's clothesline in the dead chill of winter. The helplessness of animals against the power of man has haunted me from a very early age and I believe that my mission in life is to be a staunch defender of all animals, through the power of my art.

Artist Statement

My series *The Tortured Souls* depicts the barbaric world of animal testing and focuses on the unwilling animal subjects who suffer in the name of science. Every year, millions upon millions of animals are dissected, infected, injected, gassed, burned and blinded in hidden laboratories throughout the world. Still more animals are used to test the safety of cosmetics, household cleansers and other consumer products. These innocent primates, dogs, cats, rabbits and rodents are used against their will as research subjects in a multitude of experiments that would be considered barbaric were they not conducted in the name of science. The Tortured Souls series examines the inherent ethical conflicts that arise by forcing these species that once lived in freedom to die for dubious causes of mankind. In this body of work, my photographs are merged into dreamlike, digital collages that are output as large-scale giclee prints.



TRIPTYCH, 2005
Digital artas giclee print



FROGSKIN, 2005

Artist's book

Digitally printed with archival ink and paper. Edition of 100

CHERI GAULKE

Cheri Gaulke was born St. Louis, Missouri, and came to Los Angeles to study at the Feminist Studio Workshop at The Woman's Building (1975-77). She received an MA in Feminist Art/Education at Goddard College in 1978. Gaulke co-founded the Feminist Art Workers (1976-81), which merged feminist art and education techniques into interactive performances; and the Sisters Of Survival (1981-85), who wore nun's habits in the spectrum of the rainbow and presented their anti-nuclear performances in Europe and the U.S.

Gaulke has exhibited her work at the Museum of Modern Art (NY), the Museum of Contemporary Art (LA), a Smithsonian-touring exhibition, as well as gallery and non-traditional settings all over the world including buses, churches, and prehistoric temples. She has received grants and fellowships from the National Endowment for the Arts, the California Arts Council, the City of Los Angeles Cultural Affairs Department, and the Brody Arts Fund. Gaulke's public art commissions have included the Metropolitan Transit Authority (L.A.), Los Angeles Public Library, City of Lakewood, Silver Lake Neighborhood Council and a Filipino World War II Veterans Memorial commissioned by the Los Angeles City Council with federal funding.

Artist Statement

Then

My body was my medium. My female body up against enculturated notions about religion, fashion, sexuality, the earth, other women, history.

Now

These are still my goals as I work in public art. I make visible stories about people and places in settings such as a metro station, library, city hall, bridges, street signs and a veterans memorial in a public park.

In 1975, a community of feminist artists at the Woman's Building gave me a context from which to redefine my self and my art. We defined our feminist art as art that raises consciousness, invites dialogue, and transforms culture. I worked primarily in performance art from 1974-1992, addressing themes such as religion, sexual identity, and the environment. In addition to performance art, I have worked in installation, video, sculpture and artist's books. For this exhibition I am showing two artist's books, one from the 1990s and one more recent. Books are a way I can unfold my ideas in a time-based medium and make a work that is both intimate and accessible. Both of these books use text from previously created video installations, reconfiguring the ideas for a different media.

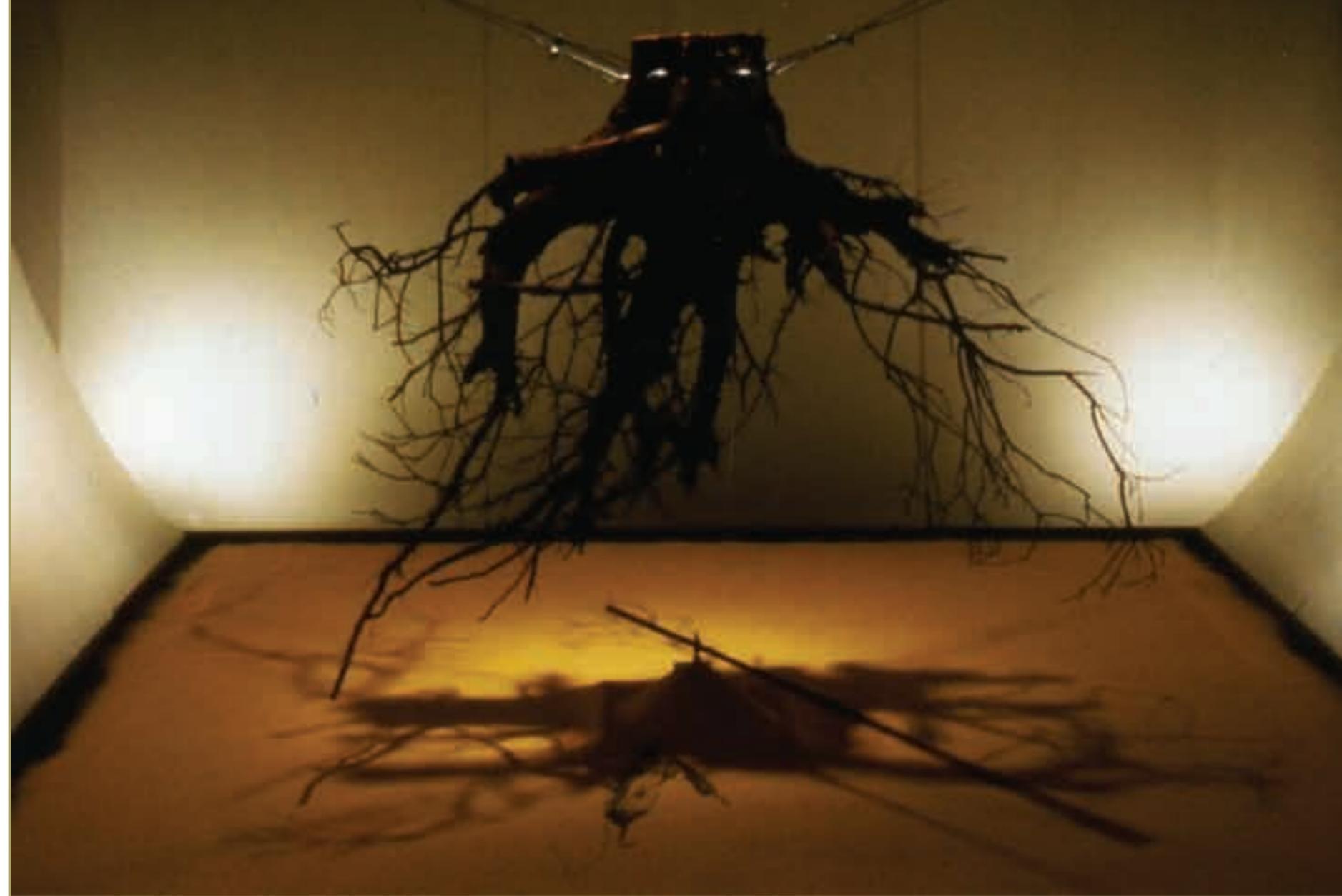
SUVAN GEER

Suvan Geer was born in Alabama and lives in Santa Ana, California. She received an MA from California State University, Fullerton in 1980. She has exhibited her installations locally, nationally and internationally including the Museo de Arte y Diseno Contemporaneo, in Costa Rica and the ecological art event, "Keepers of the Waters" in Lhasa, Tibet. One of her installations is part of the permanent collection of The Contemporary Museum, Honolulu Hawaii. She teaches and writes for various art publications including Artweek, ArtScene, Sculpture Magazine, Public Art Review and Art Nexus.

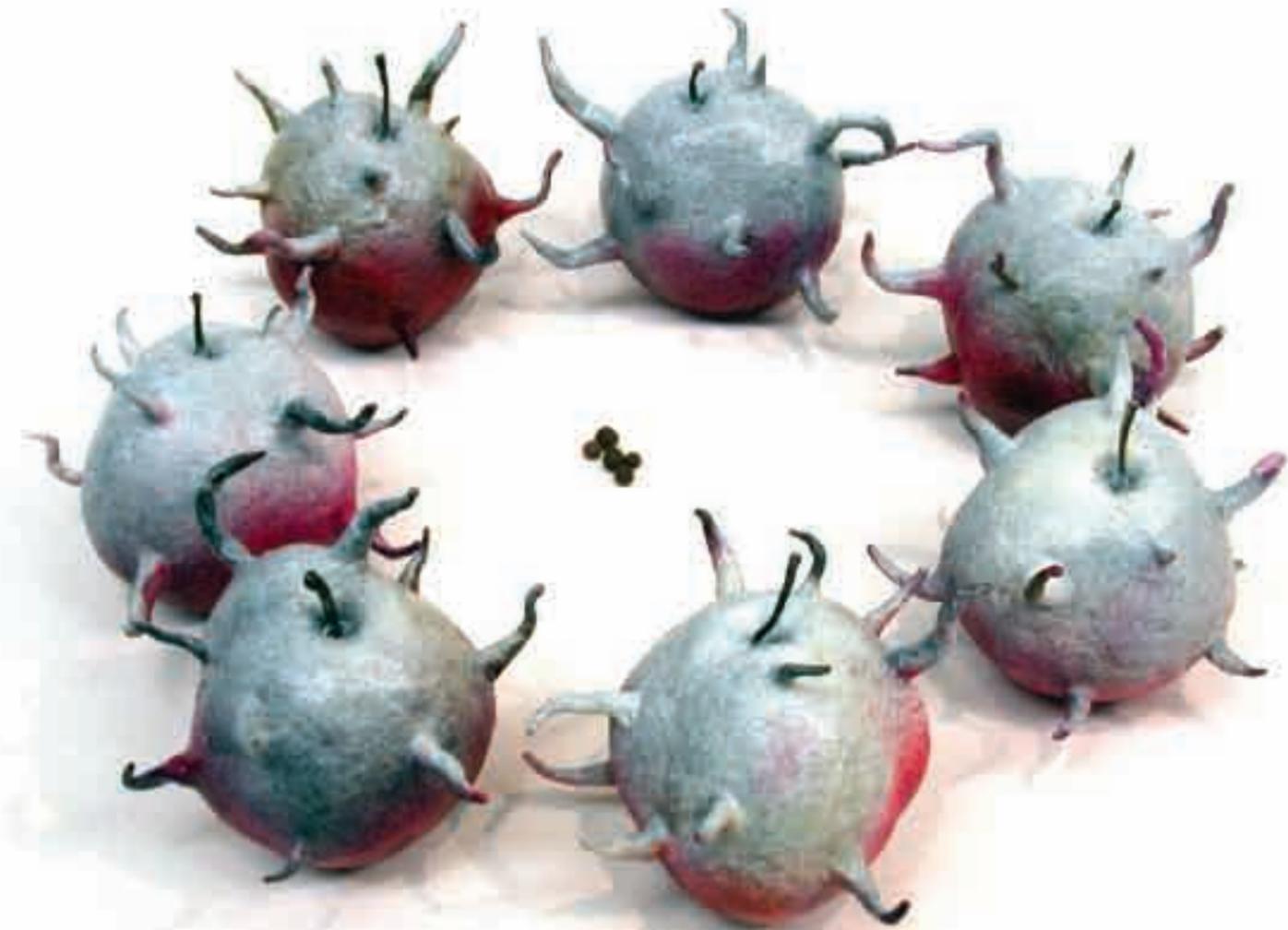
Artist Statement

Moving in Amber at the Speed of Sound is a meditation on time: its constancy, its cycles and the way we count it out with the flowing, repetitive rhythms of our bodies.

I am interested in intangibles. One way or another my art has always had something to do with the invisible, with ephemeral things or what is hidden within non-things like words or sounds. The contrariness of exploring what cannot be seen by using visual art is not lost on me. Hopefully that absurdity lends some lightness to all my digging through detritus and residue looking for nothing, and what it might mean.



MOVING IN AMBER AT THE SPEED OF SOUND, 1989
Tree stump, table, paper, motor, corn meal and recorded sound



PROTECTING THE SEEDS, 2007
Mixed media installation

PAMELA GRAU TWENA

Pamela Grau Twena grew up in a creative home – both parents were artists. Upon graduating Newport Harbor High School she traveled throughout Europe and attended an art school in France. She has a BA in Art History/ Studio Art from Mills College and attended Art Center College of Design in Pasadena. She currently lives Newport Beach, California with kids, pets and spouse. The artist has served as OCCCA's Exhibitions Director since 2003. She has been an exhibiting artist since 1979.

Artist Statement

I am entering my crone years with concerns about the future. My trepidation is not for myself nor for my three children but for planet that has been so violated in my lifetime. I wonder how can things change? I believe that Nature will try to defend herself. She may become ruthless and blind in her fury. She will mutate or adapt – she will grow horns – she will do whatever she has to in an attempt to protect herself. But is there time? In my piece *Protecting the Seeds* I have envisioned an adaptation of feminine energy that has come together to save what is left – the seeds of the future.

My paintings and sculptures are psychological metaphors that express my perceptions of an inner reality and an external world. My artwork is a by-product of a creative process that builds upon my reactions, decisions and obsessions. I teeter between social commentary and personal self-reflection. I am fascinated by visual conflicts dealing with chaos vs. structure, identity, memory and accumulated histories.

AKIKO JACKSON

Born in Honolulu, Hawai'i, Akiko Jackson grew up in a rural North Shore community on the island of O'ahu. In 1999, Akiko moved to Los Angeles, California to study Fine Arts and later received her Master of Arts in Ceramics from California State University, Northridge. Her work is based on themes of gender and procreation, using clay as a primary medium for sculpture. Her present interest is to incorporate the use of multiples in an installation based setting. Akiko has exhibited her work at the National Council on Education for the Ceramic Arts (NCECA), San Diego, California; the American Museum of Ceramic Art (AMOCA), Pomona, California; and is exhibiting in the 4th World Ceramic Biennale 2007 Korea, World Ceramic Exposition Foundation, Icheon-si, Republic of Korea. Akiko currently resides in San Jose, California, and is pursuing a Master of Fine Arts degree in San Francisco.

Artist Statement

Exponential Growth is an installation of belly-pods that portray the forty weeks of gestation during human pregnancy. I have always found this natural occurrence of growth, swelling, and development both seductive and repulsive. The work references the natural cycles of reproduction. The intent of this installation is to entice the viewer into touching each form. I create work that brings about the desire for tactility, an ability to touch the work we create.

EXPONENTIAL GROWTH, 2006
Stoneware and textured glazes



ASTRID PRESTON

Astrid Preston was born in Stockholm, Sweden. She received a B.A. from U.C.L.A. in 1967. Her work has been exhibited in galleries and museums throughout the United States and Asia. She has had articles and reviews of her work published in the LA Times, Art in America and Artforum. Preston received an NEA Fellowship Grant in Painting in 1987. Her work is in many public and private collections including the Orange County Museum of Art, the Long Beach Museum of Art, the UCLA Hammer Museum, The Oakland Museum and the Nevada Museum of Art. She lives and works in Santa Monica, where the Craig Krull Gallery represents her work.

Artist Statement

Since 1980 my paintings have focused on nature imagery. My current work is photo based. I've been interested in the abstract patterns created by sunlight reflecting off leaves, especially the overgrown and dying parts of bushes and vines. I look for images that express what I feel and can't verbalize, the emotional equivalents of my inner world. writer Michael Duncan described the work as "...meditative and illusory...philosophical considerations of our visual perceptions that probe notions of time, perspective and memory."

MORNING GLORY, 2006
Oil on Canvas



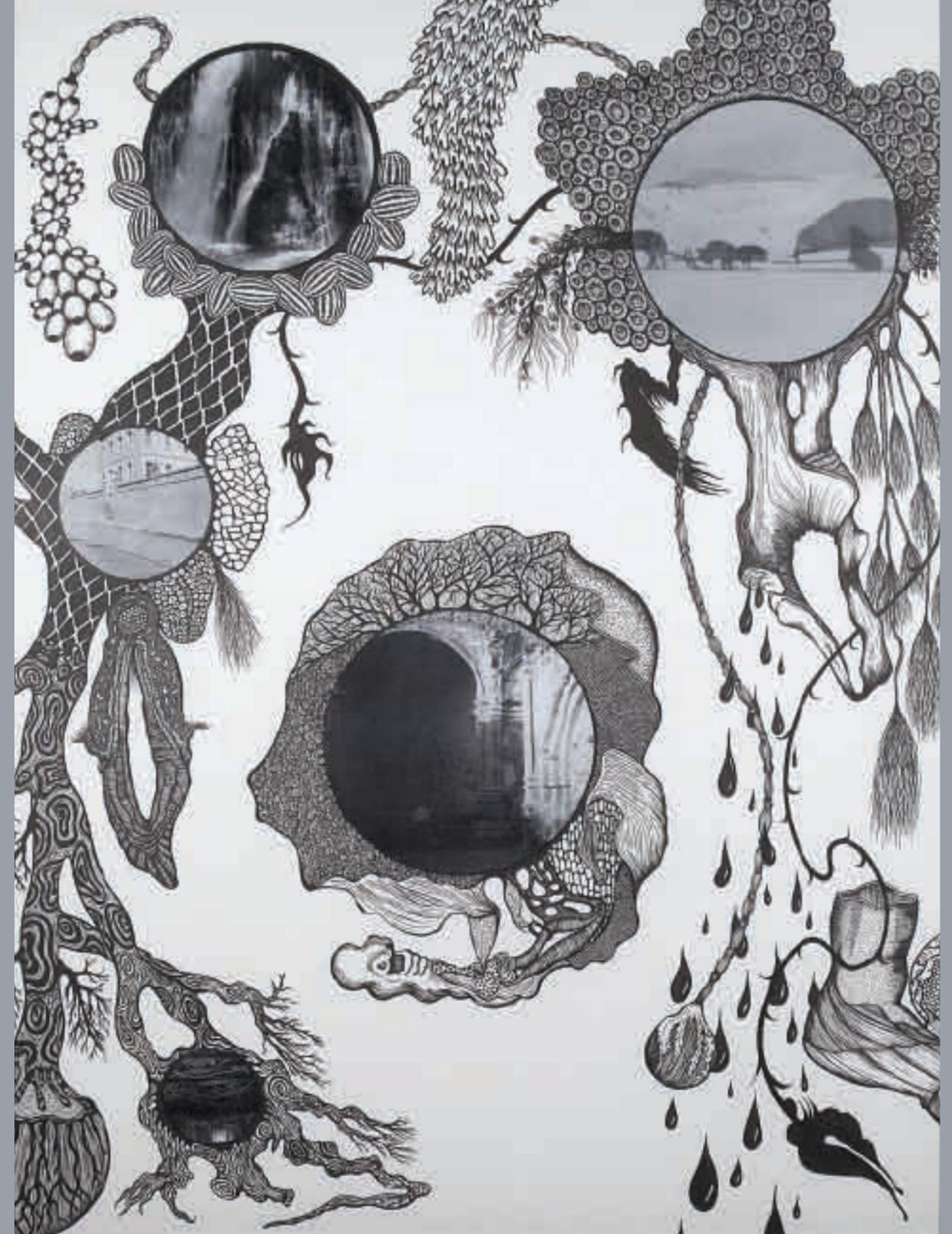
LEZLEY SAAR

Lezley Saar was born in Los Angeles in 1953. She received her B.A. from CSUN, CA after attending S.F. State and L'Institut Francais de Photographie, Paris, France. Her work has transitioned from one-of-a-kind artist books to book-sculptures to mixed media paintings to pen and ink doodles. She has had solo shows in New York at Kravets/Wehby Gallery and David Beitzel Gallery. In Los Angeles, she has solo exhibits at Koplín Gallery and Jan Baum Gallery. She's had one person shows at the Kemper Museum of Contemporary Art in Kansas City, MO, The Contemporary Arts Center in Cincinnati, OH, the List Gallery in Philadelphia, PA, Forum for Contemporary Art, St. Louis, MO, and James Madison University, Harrisonburg, VA. Recent group shows include "Lag-time Line-up" Mumbo Jumbo Gallery, New York, NY, "Whiteness, A Wayward Construction", Laguna Art Museum, CA, and "Family Legacies; The Art of Betye, Lezley & Alison Saar", Ackland Art Museum, Chapel Hill, North Carolina. Check out her website at mulattonation.com.

Artist Statement

One day I realized that I had too much time on my hands. To occupy this time I tried several ventures. First I started writing a romance novel, but I failed to finish this because I am not an idiot. Next I began giving awards to places in Old Town Torrance which I believed retained a standard of nostalgic excellence, and proceeded to compensate the winners for their efforts. However, I did not follow through on this plan either due to technical difficulties. Then I discovered that all the while I had been doing small obsessive pen and ink doodles. These images revealed an amalgam of nature, anatomy, biological forms, cartoons, gothic references, art nouveau and tattoos. I also had taken several photographs of remote places, natural disasters, and living rooms. Individually, both the drawings and photos seemed frivolous and disposable, but, when combined in a larger format had an amazing impact.Enjoy.

BUT THEE A NESIT WHAT? 2006
Photographic collage and drawing



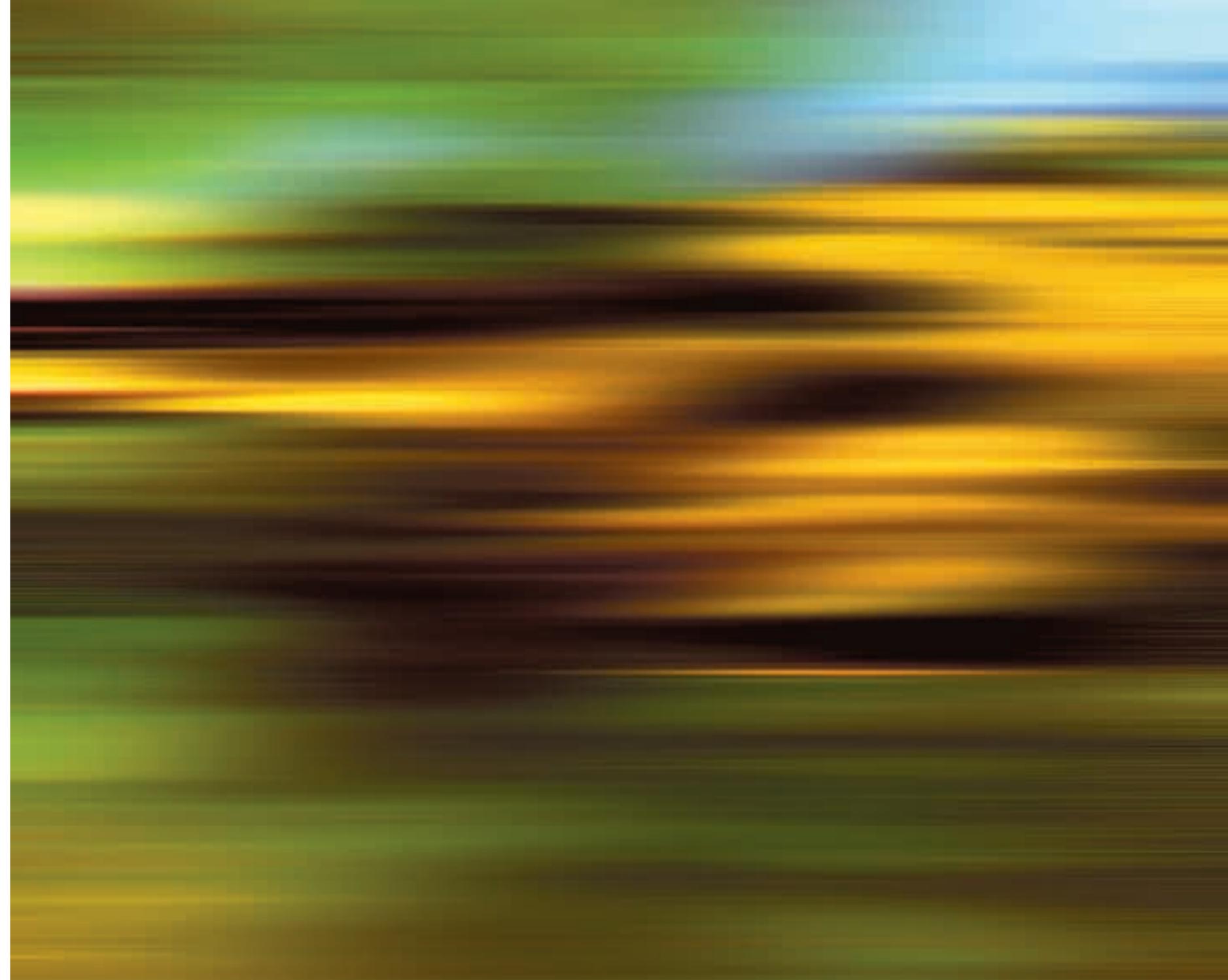
SUSAN SILTON

Susan Silton is a Los Angeles-based multidisciplinary artist whose work has been exhibited in solo and group exhibitions nationally and internationally, including Feigen Contemporary, New York; SITE Santa Fe, New Mexico; Australian Centre for Contemporary Art, Melbourne; Angles Gallery, Santa Monica; New Orleans Contemporary Art Museum; UCLA/Hammer Museum; and Allianz Zeigniederlassung, Berlin, Germany. Her work was recently included in *Picturing Modernity: The Photography Collection*, SFMOMA; and in the exhibitions *New Acquisitions/New Work/New Directions 3: Contemporary Selections*, Los Angeles County Museum of Art, Los Angeles, California, and *Selections from the Permanent Collection II: American Art on Paper from the 1960s to the Present*, Washington University Art Gallery, St. Louis, Missouri. Silton has received fellowships from The MacDowell Colony and Banff Centre for the Arts, Canada, as well as awards and commissions from the Durfee Foundation and Clockshop Foundation. She is a recipient of a Getty/California Community Foundation Fellowship in 2005, as well as a C.O.L.A. Individual Artist Fellowship in 2003. Her work has been published in numerous publications, including *Cabinet* magazine and noted art historian Amelia Jones's most recent book, *Self/Image*.

Artist Statement

Susan Silton's inclination is to mistrust the surface of things—the official version, the apparent reality. The investigation of how perceptions are shaped and distorted—by spin, by consumerism, by the weight of history, identity, and information overload—forms the conceptual framework of her practice, which includes photographic-based processes, video, installation, performance, and offset lithography. She uses these media collectively and variously to activate the ambiguous, uncomfortable, and sometimes exhilarating space of the inbetween: between truth and fiction, presence and absence, clarity and disorientation, abstraction and representation, politics and popular culture. From this tenuous site of the interstitial, the artist seeks to challenge or redirect our impulse to control or categorize nature (topographical and human) as we perceive it, and even to challenge or redirect perception itself.

FIGURE 14 FROM AVIATE, 1999
Chromogenic print





HOLLY TEMPO

Holly Tempo, who received an MFA from the Claremont Graduate University, is known for her labor-intensive paintings and site-specific works. Tempo's work is informed by an ongoing exploration of the semiotics of decoration and pattern and an engagement with both macro and micro systems in nature and society. Ambitious in scope and execution and whimsical in tone, the work interrogates the state of being of the individual as well as the group and often presents the viewer with subtle interventions. The artist has shown her work extensively at venues in Southern California, and also internationally in Great Britain, France, Israel and Central America. Tempo joined the faculty of the School of Fine Arts at Otis College of Art & Design in 2001, where she serves as Associate Professor of Painting. The artist, born in Minneapolis, Minnesota, maintains a studio in Los Angeles.

Artist Statement

Recycled Image: Chasing Arrows at Las Orchièdas

I traveled to Portobelo, Panama during the summer of 2005 to create a site-specific project in the jungle. Panama is a land of lush flora, super sized insects and a mestizo culture informed by the descendents of indigenous native peoples, slaves from the Congo, and Spanish colonists. Like my African forbears, I entered the rain forest; and, thus, began my journey.

Chasing Arrows at Las Orchièdas

I stenciled the symbol for recycling onto coconut trees in Las Orchièdas. Las Orchièdas is a 13-acre plot of land in the jungle across the bay from Portobelo, Panama. The name of the property derives from the fact that wild orchids grow there.

There were 13 stencils in all, one for each acre of land at Las Orchièdas. The sign was formed by three chasing arrows, which cued the viewer to seek the marks as he/she passed through the jungle. The prints eventually disappeared, signaling the fragile regeneration of this ecosystem.

Recycled Image

For the *Echoes* exhibition, I have appropriated my photos that document the piece in the jungle. Multiple prints of the digital photos have been reproduced and re-used for the current installation. The repeated images are insistent reminders of one possible response to the ecological crisis we face. They also reinforce the inevitability of cycles.

CHASING ARROWS AT LAS ORCHIÈDAS, 2006

Photographic documentation of site-specific work

LINDA VALLEJO

Linda Vallejo was born in Los Angeles and shortly after moved with her family to Germany. She attended elementary school in East Los Angeles, middle school in Montgomery, Alabama, and completed high school in Madrid, Spain. She received a BA from Whittier College and a Master of Fine Arts from Cal State University, Long Beach. She lives in Topanga Canyon with her husband, Ron Dillaway, and sons Robert and Paul. In the 1980s Ms. Vallejo studied Maya dance, participated in presentations and teachings in Native American and Chicano ceremonies, and has participated in traditional ceremony for over twenty-five years. Selected Exhibitions include Los Angeles Natural History Museum, Los Angeles Craft and Folk Art Museum, Carnegie Art Museum, Armand Hammer Museum, Laguna Art Museum, Bronx Museum, Museum of Modern Art New York, San Antonio Museum, Mexico City Modern Art Museum, Patricia Correia Gallery and Galeria Las Americas. Publications include ArtNews, Art Business News, Southwest Art, Saludos Hispanos, Los Angeles Times, and Latin Style Magazine.

Artist Statement

Over the past twenty-five years, I have investigated humanity's intrinsic relationship with nature, and conversely, the destruction of the natural world through modern pollution. This work has been deeply influenced by Ana Mendieta's use of nature and natural materials combined with photography, Lee Bontecou's nature-inspired, mixed media "crystalline" sculptural forms, the sensual power of Georgia O'Keeffe's landscapes, and my personal study of contemporary indigenous philosophy and symbolism.

These influences led me to create *A Prayer for the Earth*, an installation that pays homage to the significance of nature and its ability to shelter us from the calamities and senseless losses of the modern world. *A Prayer* creates an "environment" using a combination of landscape painting to represent the eternal beauty of the earth and sky; *Tree People*, earth-based sculpture focusing on our metamorphic relationship with nature; and a central mixed media mandala with photographs of tragic images of pollution, and in contrast, images of international indigenous peoples "praying for their mother, the earth"; surrounded by an assemblage of Earth, Water, Fire and Air, the four eternal, primordial elements.

Electric Oaks on the Hillside shows nature as an "electric and living" source of beauty and inspiration, and reminds us that nature should be respected and protected. *Electric Oaks* serves as the centerpiece for my *A Prayer for the Earth* installation at the Orange County Center for Contemporary Art.



TITLE OF WORK GOES HERE, 2006

MEDIUM AND OTHER INFORMATION ABOUT THE WORK WILL GO HERE



MIRIAM WOSK

Miriam Wosk, born in Vancouver Canada, is an artist who currently lives and works in Santa Monica, California. She exhibits her work both in galleries and museums nationally, including her recent show *Euphoria: The Paintings by Miriam Wosk* at the *Santa Monica Museum of Art. Billy Shire Fine Arts* in Culver City, California presented *Miriam Wosk: Works on Paper* in 2006. At the same time *Sequins & Skeletons: The Art of Miriam Wosk* a hardbound full-color 74 page book, was also published by La Luz de Jesus Press. In her former career as an illustrator in New York City in the 1970's she worked for various publications including *The New York Times*, *New York Magazine*, *Esquire*, *Vogue*, *Mademoiselle*, and illustrated the first cover of *Ms. Magazine*, as well as their 30th Anniversary back cover. Recent articles published on her work and life, were included in *O At Home - An Oprah Magazine*, *The Los Angeles Times*, *Venice Magazine*, *Los Angeles Magazine*, and *Artweek*.

Artist Statement

My mixed media, multi-layered, exuberantly ornamental paintings depict a unique world entirely of their own, reflecting the visions, dreams, fantasy and play of my imagination. Inspired by nature, these thickly encrusted three-dimensional paintings are inhabited by extraterrestrial flowers, poetic vegetative forms, cosmological atmosphere and crystalline bursts composed of pearls, crystals, glitter, mixed media and paint. The paintings explore the invisible forces of life intuitively through a love of beauty, color, and pattern reflecting the astonishment, wonder, and awe of existence.

Lisa Melandri of SMMOA writes, "Wosk explores a fantastical, primordial universe born of pouring, painting, airbrushing, gluing, embedding, and coating in a devotional, mantra-like repetition. Combining pictorial elegance with audacious excess, the artist invites her audience to release themselves into a seductive maelstrom where iridescent apparitions glow from within and erupt from the painted surface."

TIME, SPACE, COSMOLOGY AND LIFE, 2003-05, DETAIL

Acrylic, crystals, perls, glitter and mixed media on canvas



UNTITLED, 1999
Oil and metal leaf on paper



UNTITLED, 1999
Oil and metal leaf on paper

TAKAKO YAMAGUCHI

Takako Yamaguchi was born in Okayama, Japan. She attended Bates College (Maine) and received her M.F.A. from the University of California, Santa Barbara in 1978. She has had solo exhibitions at venues such as Kathryn Markel (New York), Jan Baum Gallery (Los Angeles), Morishita Museum (Okayama), Galleria OMR (Mexico City) and Raab Gallery (Berlin). Important group exhibitions include *Contemporary Soliloquies on the Natural World* (USC Fisher Gallery, Los Angeles) and *L. A. Post-Cool* (San Jose Museum of Art). She has been the recipient of awards and grants including the COLA award (City of Los Angeles) and the Gottlieb Foundation grant.

Artist Statement

Arriving in America from another country and another culture, I think of myself as an “outsider” despite having lived and worked here most of my adult life. While mine is hardly a unique situation it perhaps explains why, in my role as an artist, I feel an affinity for images and ideas that fall outside the boundaries of the dominant art discourse. At the start of my career it was just this attraction to difference that steered me away from mainstream positions in contemporary art such as “the austere,” “the tough” and “the ugly” and directed me instead to the trash-heap of discarded ideals. The poet Wallace Stevens named this

place “the dump” (we wrote, “Of the floweriest flowers dewed with the dewiest dew. / One grows to hate these things except on the dump”). And it was there I discovered decoration, fashion and beauty along with empathy, sentimentality and pleasure; forms and values I hold all the more dear for their long exclusion from serious consideration in contemporary art.

The work in this exhibition is from a period when my paintings featured images of water in its various manifestations--cloud, rain, stream, current, ocean--as a common theme. Rendered upon a base of splashed paint (liquid, like water) these representations flow around and through the space of the paintings, changing form while shifting identity between figure and ground, decorated surface and illusionistic space. Related to the monumental seascapes of 19th Century European Romanticism (with their disquieting intimations of limitless horizon and fathomless depth) these paintings are at least equally influenced by the fabric design of kimonos from my native Japan where boldly abstract patterns and delicate representations of nature are often playfully juxtaposed. Drawing from such diverse sources I’ve sought to recover the lost poignancy of the seascape genre while twisting it in a way that might transform this most familiar convention into something new and strange.

