

ARTISTS SPACE: PROJECT DESCRIPTION

HOT COFFEE

JANUARY - MARCH 1997

During the past two or three years a new generation of artists has come into focus in Los Angeles. Educated in the competitive atmosphere generated by the area's high-powered art schools (Art Centre, CalArts, Otis, UC Irvine, UCLA), this is a group of young artists who decided not to move to New York on graduating. Instead they have developed a scene around varying constellations of small, occasional (and often short-lived) venues such as Bliss, Foodhouse, and Three Day Weekend. What began as a casual, city-wide continuation of graduate school is now firming into something more established, and a small number of more business-like spaces are opening up, taking on responsibility for exhibiting and promoting this new work. Now seems a good time to take stock. This show will be the result of an investigation into the possibility of shared themes and issues. An essay will explore the context, and discuss the investigation; the show will highlight the work of five or six artists who seem to focus these issues most clearly.

The transient nature of Los Angeles has become something too often remarked upon, yet it is hard to deny the flux of the place. People come and go. From the United States they mostly come looking for the glamour of The Industry, but from around the Pacific and from Mexico and Central America they come looking for jobs and security. Cultures shift and merge and split apart again; as does the ground beneath our feet. The work I have been looking at takes on this hybrid sense of unease. There is no particular allegiance to medium or category, yet there does seem to be an interest in using the supposed stability of certain art forms, like painting, as an anchor against which to work shifting and uncertain representations. There is an attempt to find a beauty, or at least the pathos of an ordering, in the clutter of rescued banality. Although the show is of work from Los Angeles, it is not necessarily about life in that city only. Instead, it is about the weird anomie generated by post-suburbia.

The artists under consideration are:

Julie Becker, who for the past year and a half has been involved in a major installation project that conflates imagery from *Eloise* and *The Shining*. This is a very large and ambitious piece that includes a full-scale replica of a hotel reception area; two dollhouse-scale models of a large hotel that is part Plaza, part Overlook; and a work area -- a studio environment that includes notes and drawings for the project, unfinished items, tools, chairs, radio, and coffee maker, with stale, but still-warm coffee. Only a fragment of this could be shown at Artists Space.

Andrea Bowers typically makes sweetly horrific installations using the barely visible furniture of suburban family life. The windows at LACE are spattered with skeins of pink sugar from a candy floss machine run amok. Items with a patina of value, collectibles of

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some sort, now damaged, are repaired and re-presented as new, bravely declaring themselves still worth keeping.

Dave Muller is interested in social systems -- the ways in which meanings are made and then clung to in the dynamics of the group. For several years he has been orchestrating Three Day Weekend, which is a situation that allows a self-defined group to mount a show/performance/party over any weekend holiday. As these events multiply a certain mythology develops, which Dave then exploits and/or undermines in a series of mock posters which seem to announce further events staged by the stars of the Three Day Weekend series.

Marina Rosenfeld is a musician and videomaker. Her Sheer Frost Orchestra features twenty female performers wearing frilly tuxedo shirts and black jeans sitting on the floor in front of a row of electric guitars. During the performance they play a Cage-like score, using nail polish bottles instead of plectrums. A more recent piece involves a home movie shot from the back of a Harley Davidson, excerpts from a B-grade biker movie and a live deconstruction of a Bon Jovi song, featuring two guitars and an unplayed drum kit.

Kent Young makes wall installations that look at first like tasteful constructivism, but are actually made of found, and therefore used, towels and sheets.

--Thomas Lawson
June 1996