

MAY/JUNE 2001

# ART <sup>25</sup> PAPERS

25TH ANNIVERSARY

M A G A Z I N E



## FEMME PHOTOGRAPHY

Reclaiming the Gaze

## PLUS: SOULS GROWN DEEP

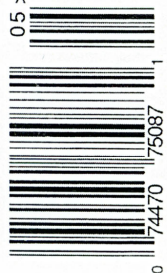
Legacy of the Vernacula



## Erotic Abstraction

Art, Sex and the Body

05 > VOL 25.3 USA \$7 CAN \$9  
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ly notices flat areas of color in the shapes of flowers painted directly on the gallery wall. As with the individual paintings, the color of each painted flower comes from *Sunset* and is given a name that was selected by the magazine as a desirable color for that year or month. The flowers become "cool blue rose and thistle" or "red rich saturated nature" as well as "dark green cool owl." Flowers are painted on the walls, floor and ceiling of the gallery, providing a decorative background onto which the paintings and sculptures are placed. One may encounter a single flower or a collage of overlapping images that move off the wall onto the floor or the ceiling. The shapes of the flowers are culled from William Morris patterns and are similarly incorporated into Lonner's paintings and sculptures.

In addition to the paintings, Lonner has also created a series of sculptures. Collectively entitled "If I Took All the Trips in *Sunset*" these pieces map the trips outlined in the magazine. Each trip becomes a linear element that has been carved out of a piece of sheet rock and then filled with joint compound. (In past installations, she has used sheet rock and joint compound to create architectural works that explored the relationship between building and site.)

Lonner is interested in challenging the boundaries within a given medium. Her paintings are sculptural, her sculptures are structural and her structures are architectural as well as ornamental. The work is about decoration and what kind of ornamentation can be best conveyed in which material. Lonner draws from popular culture, yet is less interested in what popular culture has to offer than what she can do with it. The people who read *Sunset* aspire to something more than they have. By using inexpensive materials or by applying a new coat of paint to the wall one can transform one's home and therefore one's well being. Lonner takes this one step further, insisting that one can begin with the colors or the patterns accepted by consumer culture and can make then into something unique and extraordinary.

Jody Zellen  
Los Angeles

## SAN DIEGO

**INSITE 2000** (October 13— February 25), the San Diego/Tijuana art event that spanned five months, presented 30 new art works, assorted parties, artists residencies, and educational programming, has finally ended, and yet it will hardly be missed. Though well organized, the cost of admission, the one time only performances, long cross border drives, and out-of-the-way locations, kept audiences small. This presentation, the fourth mounted since the inSITE events began in 1992, raised the curatorial bar by featuring more internationally known artists, including Alfredo Jaar, Mark Dion, Komar and Melamid, Allan McCollum, Lorna Simpson, Jorge Pardo, and Silvia Gruner. The four curators chosen also had outstanding qualifications: Susan Buck-Morss, a Cornell Professor, author,



Valeska Soares, *Picturing Paradise* (shown with two Tijuana residents staring at the United States through the boarder fence between Tijuana and San Diego), 2000, mirrored stainless steel plates engraved with text from Italo Calvino's *Invisible Cities*, dimensions variable (photo by Julia Morton).

and board member of *October*; Ivo Mesquita, Director of the 2001 São Paulo Bienal; Osvaldo Sánchez, an art critic, curator, and art historian; and Sally Yard, University of San Diego Professor, art critic, curator, and author. Together this prestigious group challenged past concepts of site specificity and community engagement. Their curatorial statement read in part, "Our idea is to expose the patterns of traffic that road maps conceal in order to observe the permanent motion of this urban protoplasm...not the object but the process is important... Rather than merely entering urban space, the works of art reconfigure it... the public shifts from audience to co-investigator. We are interested in how public space has been kidnapped by modern state discourse...We want to disarm the historical notion of landscape...revealing its interwoven differences and ragged similarities, enabling unpredictable exchange." While the intent may have been dramatic and sincerely utopian, the artistic results, for the most part, fell short. Several artists did manage to "weave their projects into the fabric of daily life," but local relevance was vague. Instead the focus was on the artists' own theoretical concerns; the inSITE event was simply the setting. Roman de Salvo, for example, set up a mock computer game booth; garishly decorated, it blended well into its Mexican arcade location. Mixing high and low-tech functions, the conceptual work explored de Salvo's childhood memories of Mexico, and more importantly, his interest in building complex systems. Mark Dion enjoys bird watching and architecture. He set up a bird blind titled *Blind/Hide* at a large nature reserve on the border. Inside the camouflaged shelter were books featuring area birds, maps, tools, and a scope pointed at a nearby breeding pond. Off in the distance housing developments crowded one edge of the park, a wire fence marked the borderline at the other end, and military helicopters on training exercises flew overhead. Silvia Gruner made her own life the cross-cultural site of exploration. While driving back and forth across the border she recorded two therapists psychoanalyzing her, and turned it into a video. Vitaly Komar and Alex Melamid conducted surveys with students from San Diego and Tijuana to determine art preferences. Based on the survey answers Komar and Melamid created two "most wanted paintings," one for each city. Hung alongside fine art in area museums the

badly done, tacky paintings made fun of local tastes in popular art. So much for involving the cherished "co-investigators."

A number of projects meant to reconfigure the "urban protoplasm" were so weak they barely registered as projects at all. Judith Barry's videos projected on abandoned store front windows went unnoticed due to poor natural light. Arturo Cuenca made a sign that read "You Are Aqui" and hung it on the side of a pedestrian bridge. According to the artist the work was created to "locate the 45,000 cars that drive beneath it en route to the United States." Other artists did create works that involved local residents, but these projects were primarily viewed after the fact as video documents. Mônica Nador lived for two months in a remote community where she taught families how to define personal symbols, then she helped them to decorate their homes with the stenciled images. Ugo Palavicino worked with Tijuana residents to create "plays" that dealt with issues in their lives and neighborhoods. Alberto Caro Limón designed and constructed a new park with and for the children of Tijuana. Gustavo Artigas, who lives in Mexico City, created the event's best performance piece titled *The Rules of the Game*. Living up to the goals of inSITE, the project /game took place in a Tijuana high school gym that was formerly a casino. Two local high school soccer teams and two San Diego basketball teams played their separate games on the same court. Students and inSITE guests cheered and booed from the packed bleachers. The confusion that ensued as the two sets of players collided and merged was both conceptually and visually inspired.

On close inspection inSITE's higher goals seem only partially realized. Too many of the artists sent to free the kidnapped public space from the modern state, alas, gave in to self interest, and enabled the predictable.

Julia Morton  
San Diego

## SAN FRANCISCO

In **JESS HILLIARD: AN UNDYING FASCINATION FOR ALL ANIMALS, ESPECIALLY THE CUTE ONES** (San Francisco Arts Commission Gallery, February 2— March 10), curator Harrell Fletcher called upon seven artists to create work about and inspired by a mutual friend named Jess



Will Rogers and Bob Lindner, *Where do I know you from?*, 2001, buttons, dimensions variable (photo courtesy of San Francisco Arts Commission Gallery).