

INSITE 97: NEW PROJECTS IN PUBLIC SPACES BY ARTISTS OF THE AMERICAS

SAN DIEGO/TIJUANA

InSITE began in 1993 as an ambitious project attempting to bring artists from Mexico and the United States to the border region of San Diego/Tijuana. This is the third — and by far the most successful — version of the project. This year, the scope of the show was expanded to include thirty-eight artists from all the Americas, selected by curators Olivier Debroise from Mexico, Ivo Mesquita from Brazil, Jessica Bradley from Canada, and Sally Yard from the United States. As a result of this eclectic curatorial team, internationally established artists such as Allan Sekula and Lorna Simpson ended up sharing exhibition spaces with much younger artists from Latin-America, often to the advantage of the latter.

Some of the most successful works were those that reflected the bizarre relationship between

the two towns on either side of the border. Melanie Smith set up an apocryphal "Tourist Information Center" in one of the busiest blocks in downtown San Diego. Inside, bewildered visitors found giant photographs and postcards depicting obese beach-bums, portraits of a greasy hamburger joint at the Tijuana bus station (the caption read "stop off at Burger King at you arrival at Tijuana's modern bus station, before being whisked off to your luxury hotel") and, in short, everything that an average tourist would not want to know about the border.

Ken Lum presented two very witty photo and text works. The first one displays a photograph of a Tijuana street corner where a young boy peddles cigarettes, candy, and other wares; the accompanying text is a fragment from a Mexican nursery rhyme. The other photograph, taken in San Die-

go, presents a teenager talking on her cell phone, and the text reads "Mexican or Chinese? Mexican or Chinese?"

Along a similar theme, Thomas Glassford installed, this time at a real tourist information center, *City of Greens*, a video about San Diego's obsession with golf courses, of which the city has over two hundred. The narrative parodies suspense film, and shows the artist, dressed in black and carrying a briefcase, running from San Diego to Tijuana while he attempts to spot all the golf courses in the city. He finds greens in the most unexpected places — on the sidewalk, on the roof of a skyscraper, in the trunk of a Mercedes, on the antenna of a cell phone, and... on the nipples of a nude dancer.

Other successful works included a minimalist sound machine by Venezuelan José An-



Ken Lum, project for inSITE97, 1997.

tonio Hernández Diez, a series of dispensers full of satanic toys installed by Eduardo Abaroa, Daniela Rossell's unrealized plans for a monumental tooth floating in the ocean, and a series of life-size portraits of Tijuana's inhabitants by Brazilian artist Rosângela Renno. All in all, inSITE 97 was an extremely energetic project that brought together dozens of exciting works which — with a great sense of play — managed to escape the clichés that traditionally plague border projects. (*Rubén Gallo*)

SAN DIEGO/TIJUANA

inSITE97 Takes Shape

Planning is well underway for "inSITE97," a collaborative art exhibition and community engagement project based on artistic exploration and activation of public spaces in the San Diego/Tijuana region. A large-scale exhibition, set to open in September '97 and run for nine weeks, will feature 30 new works by artists from throughout the Americas situated in places of public meeting spread across the two cities. Residencies in the region, for both curators and artists, will enable participants to delve into the communities in which they choose to work. Residencies for artists begin June '96.

Four curators have been selected to work with collaborating institutions. They are Olivier Debroyse, a curator and novelist in Mexico City; Ivo Mesquita, a critic and curator from Brazil; Sally Yard, a critic and art historian in San Diego; and Jessica Bradley, curator of contemporary art at the Art Gallery of Ontario. Funding for the exhibition will come from a variety of sources, including a \$150,000 grant from The James Irving Foundation.

inSITE '97

“inSITE '97: New Projects in Public Spaces By Artists of the Americas” is a binational collaborative project of 26 non-profit and public institutions in Mexico and the U.S. focused on the activation of public space in the transnational context of the San Diego/Tijuana region. This 3rd version of inSITE is organized by Jessica Bradley, Olivier Debroise, Ivo Mesquita, and Sally Yard and among many artists from all over the Americas includes: Kim Adams, Francis Alÿs, Betsabé Romero, and Lorna Simpson. 26 September to 30 November. www.insite97.org.