

inSITE97: Exhibition Engages with Whimsical, Sublime Art

San Diego/Tijuana — Using the San Diego/Tijuana region as a backdrop, artists are creating 41 projects in public spaces for the *inSITE97* exhibition, September 26 through November 30, which will tease, provoke, entertain and surprise. Approximately 50 artists, representing 10 countries from the Americas, are creating works that probe the historical, social and cultural matrices of the region. Participants range from internationally-recognized artists, such as Vito Acconci, Francis Alys, Helen Escobedo and Lorna Simpson, to emerging talents.

"Projects are situated to engage the public in unexpected ways and in unexpected places," says Michael Krichman, executive director/U.S. for *inSITE97*. Sites range from a forsaken 1930's movie marquee in Downtown San Diego to a house transformed into a community center in Tijuana's Colonia Altamira. One project straddles the border fence where it marches out to sea. Other projects will be scattered throughout the area, inviting visitors to partake in a playful scavenger hunt. The exhibition has been concentrated between

Downtown San Diego and Playas de Tijuana, enabling visitors to easily tour the exhibition in a day.

A number of projects will be mobile and popping up all over the region unannounced. Filmmaker and nouveau truck mechanic Rubén Ortiz Torres of Los Angeles is creating *Alien Toy*, *UCO (Unidentified Cruising Object)*, consisting of a low rider truck with a hydraulic bed that functions as a video projector. He'll be displaying the truck and low rider videos at car shows and various *inSITE97* venues. Kim Adams, a Canadian artist known for his whimsical mobile works incorporating sculpture, transportation and architecture, will build *Toaster Work Wagon*, a large, mobile toaster/sculpture studio that will wend through the cities, giving passersby the opportunity to help construct sculptures out of tricycles.

Brazilian artist Iran do Espírito Santo will be strewing 20 four-foot-square, red granite dice at various sites around the region—playing off the notion of chance as it relates to place of birth, border crossing and gaming interests.

Thomas Glassford, a Texas-born artist who works in Mexico City, is creating a virtual/actual golf course, consisting of 18 holes at sites throughout San Diego and Tijuana. Some holes may be played, while others may only be viewed through a peep hole, a security monitor or other unconventional device. A player's guide to the course will be provided by the artist.

Several projects, while displayed in a central location, will take artists far afield. The best example is *Around the World Backwards* by Belgium-born artist Francis Alys, who works in Mexico City. His piece will document, via e-mail, correspondence, postcards and video, a round-the-world trek that will start at the Tijuana-side of the border fence and end up at the adjacent U.S. side. In between he will travel to Mexico City; Santiago, Chile; Papeete, French Polynesia; Sydney, Australia; Singapore; Bangkok, Thailand; Hong Kong; Shanghai, China; Seoul, Korea; Anchorage, Alaska; Seattle; Vancouver, Canada; and Los Angeles.

New York artist Gary Sim-

mons is working with a sky writer to create a gigantic snowflake in the Southern California desert. A video documenting the creation and dissolution of the sky writing will be projected onto a train destination chalk board hanging from the rafters of the Baggage Building at the Santa Fe Depot.

The largest project, no doubt, will be constructed by the team of Marcos Ramírez ERRE, Josué Castro, Javier Galaviz, Julio Orozco and Alejandro Zacarías, at the San Ysidro Border Crossing. They are constructing *Troy and Horse*, a 16-foot-tall, double-headed, wooden horse, reminiscent of the Trojan Horse. The imposing structure will invite questions about invasion, tourist trade and the effects of intercultural associations. Replicas of the sculpture will be offered for sale to commuters and tourists waiting in the interminable border crossing lines.

Rosangela Rennó, who has teamed up with Tijuana wedding photographer Eduardo Zepeda, is undertaking a photographic work based in portraits of Tijuana immigrants from throughout Mexico. The eccen-

tric portraiture will be displayed in the storefront windows of The Paladion shopping center and in the windows at the Children's Museum/Museum de los Niños, both in Downtown San Diego.

Mexican-born artist Helen Escobedo and her collaborative team, Armando Lavat, Alberto Caro-Limon and Franco Mendez, are developing an installation examining the process of the cleaning or de-milkization of milk as seen from two diverse cultural viewpoints, north and south of the border. The installation will be located at the ReinCarnation Project, a former Carnation milk processing plant, in Downtown San Diego.

San Diego artist Patricia Patterson has rented a small house in Colonia Altamira, one of Tijuana's oldest neighborhoods for her project *Mi Nueva Casita, Mi Nueva Colonia*. She is collaborating with local gardeners, craftspeople and artisans to transform the house into a neighborhood meeting place/information center.

The *inSITE97* exhibition is curated by Jessica Bradley of

Toronto. Olivier Debroise of Mexico City, Ivo Mesquita of Sao Paulo, Brazil and Sally Yard of San Diego. The exhibition will open the weekend of Sept. 26-27 with a variety of events in San Diego and Tijuana.

In addition to the exhibition, *inSITE97* has an ambitious calendar of 15 community engagement programs that will actively involve approximately 8,000 area students and residents. A host of education programs will present noted artists and writers, including Carlos Fuentes, Coco Fusco and Carlos Monsiváis. A three-day symposium, exploring a range of topics centered around public space in the urban context, is scheduled for November 20-22. Additionally, Laurie Anderson will present the West Coast premiere of her critically acclaimed work, *The Speed of Darkness*, featuring stories and songs about the future of art and technology, on September 26 at the ReinCarnation Project in Downtown San Diego.