

NIGHT & DAY

OCTOBER 22-28, 1992

THE SAN DIEGO UNION-TRIBUNE

Critic's choice

"Resolve: An Installation" is a particularly good title for Chuck Collings' show at David Zapf Gallery (2400 Kettner Blvd, 232-5004, through Oct. 31). The craft needed to construct his wood sculptures is ambitious. Collings joins tiny components to create forms, large and small, favoring curves rather than lines. They refer to baskets, ceramic vessels, tubs, hourglasses and other familiar things from daily life.

His objects have an unequivocally resolved look to them, too, as does the arrangement of large sculptures in the main gallery. The uniformity of the pale wood color is also pleasing to the eye.

As worthwhile as this show is to see, it offers too much of a good thing. The surfaces of Collings' art are elegant, the shapes are elegant and the arrangement is elegant. Add to this the fact that Zapf's space itself is handsome — an asset most of the time, but a problem in this instance — and the show is akin to a fine dessert with too much sugar.

→ "Shadow Town," the title of Jason Tannen's show in a temporary gallery space at 930 E St. (688-9531), is intelligently chosen, too. His photographs are shadowy and full of implied violence. The work draws on highly related sources: Raymond Chandler mysteries and film noir.

The scenes in Tannen's images and the walk-in installation, on view through Saturday, clearly draw on fiction and film: a woman on a bridge tightly clutching an envelope; a deserted train station late at night. Tannen's installation, less like a real detective's office than a stage set, has phones off the hook, mock paintings on the wall, a sinister slide show and the artist's video playing on the television.

The videotaped city on the tube looks evil, too, because Tannen has put us in a frame of mind to see it that way. Oscar Wilde was right: life does often come to resemble art. Our town becomes Tannen's shadow town.

— Robert L. Pincus