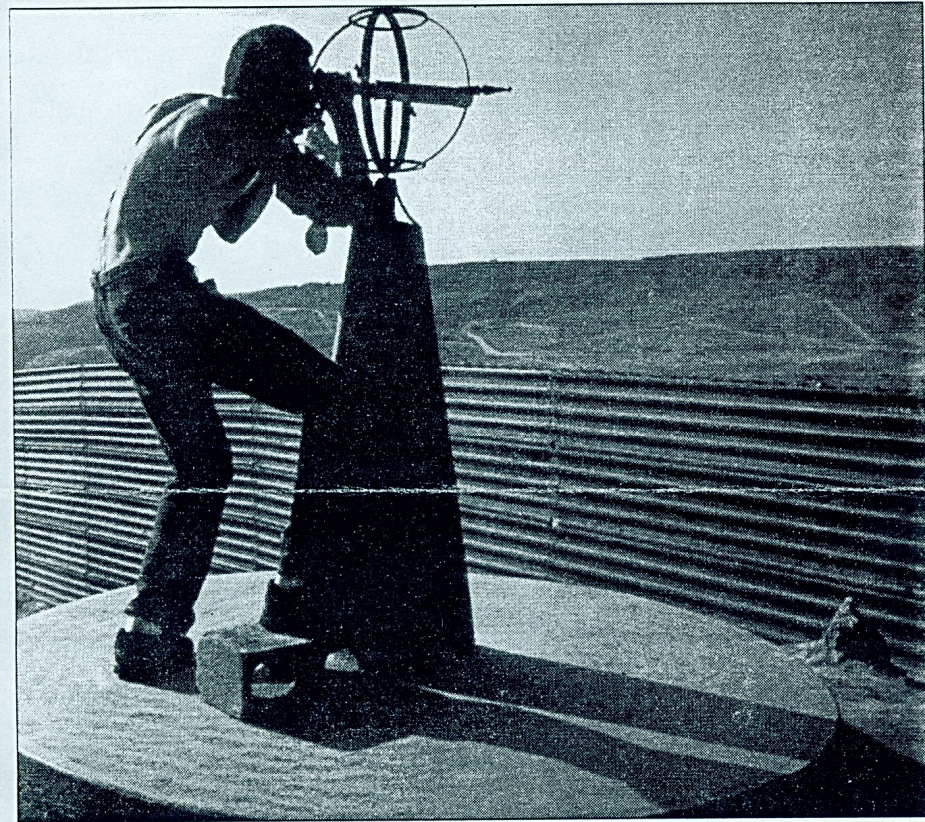


# Border Tones

## inSITE97 at San Diego and Tijuana



PHILLIP SCHOLZ RITTERMANN

transformed the house, they became part of the community. Now, the neighborhood loves the spirit of the house, the celebration of and attention to domesticity.

Not unexpectedly, cars seem to be a compelling theme. Ruben Ortis-Torres with collaborator Sal Munoz, created "Alien Toy (Unidentified Cruising Object)"—a low-rider like you have never seen. Singularly placed in a San Diego warehouse, fractured in all directions, with movable parts, the "thing" breathtakingly commands the volume of space. It does look as if a mad engineer let loose made "Alien Toy" for outer-space tripping, and he wryly stuck on the Border Patrol striping and logo. A video projector sits on the curious machine and projects Ortis-Torres's inventive story about the car's manufacture.

Betsabee Romero's "Jute Car," on the other hand, comes from a feminine sensibility. Slanting on the side of a sandy Tijuana hill close to the border, the car appears as if it had fallen from or leaped over the steel fence. The 1955 Ford is covered with yellow canvas painted with faded roses. Inside dried rose petals fill up the windshield and windows. The car becomes a huge sachet. Here, too, as with Patterson's house, community people feel the tenderness of Romero's work and protect the beautiful, vulnerable, stranded object providing shade for stray dogs.

In the Baggage Room of San Diego's Santa Fe Depot, Deborah Small's collaborative installation, "Rowing in Eden," also explores women's issues. A room with floor, shelves, and ceiling gorgeously packed with bunches of herbs, plants, grasses, and baskets of fresh, red apples saturates the space with

framework and to the choice of artists made by the team of curators—Jessica Bradley from Canada, Olivier Debrouse from Mexico, Ivo Mesquita from Brazil, and Sally Yard from the U.S. Another reason for the strength of the projects was that artists were encouraged to make and provided for several in-depth residencies in the region.

This is the third version of *inSITE* since 1992. You have to hand it to this year's leadership provided by Michael Krichman, executive director/U.S. and Carmen Cuenca, executive director/Mexico. They and their staff did an outstanding job of coordinating the massive art venture, a collaborative effort of 27 nonprofit and public art institutions from San Diego and Tijuana. Krichman credits the help provided by two top-ranking government officials, U.S. Attorney Alan Bersin (who prosecutes illegal immigrants) and the Consulate General of Mexico in San Diego (who protects them), for their enabling cooperation. Reportedly, these two men are good friends.

*inSITE97* has an active calendar of community engagement and education programs ranging from artist-led projects in schools, community centers, and libraries to workshops for artists, a performance and lecture series, and an academic conference. The *inSITE97* catalogue will not be ready until after the close of the exhibition November 30.

There are approximately 20 sites to visit in the San Diego/Tijuana region. A well-designed map is available at the *inSITE97* office, 964 Fifth Ave., San Diego. The projects are open 11 a.m.-5 p.m., Tuesday through Sunday. Admission is free. A variety of docent bus tours are offered on weekends only. Traveling by bus is much easier, especially in Tijuana. Tijuana-

that this model might be cloned, with different issues, in different places, like Santa Barbara or San Francisco?

About 50 artists and artists' teams from 11 Western Hemisphere countries were invited to participate in *inSITE97*. The artists were commissioned to make new, temporary installations to explore the issues, interests, and quirky proclivities of the nettlesome region.

The installations are situated indoors and outdoors in San Diego and Tijuana public spaces such as parks, plazas, the beach, an old mat-

tional Waters," a drinking fountain with twin faucets on either side of the metal divider. Though seemingly an easy project, it was the toughest of many difficult works to permit because it needed governmental approval from both the U.S. and Mexico. Hock's project exemplifies the bi-national challenges *inSITE97* encountered.

A nearby project is a different example of the strategic problems of achieving permissions. The land on which Nari Ward wanted to put his

**Barely in the United States do we get to see an**

### BY BETTY KLAUSNER

San Diego and Tijuana, both sunny and warm, geographically touching one another on the Pacific shore, don't share the same nationality, language, or culture. Politics and economics bifurcate the region and stress out the inhabitants.

Tijuana is no longer just a tourist town. It actually ranks number one in the world's production of television. Yet, the feel and reality is that