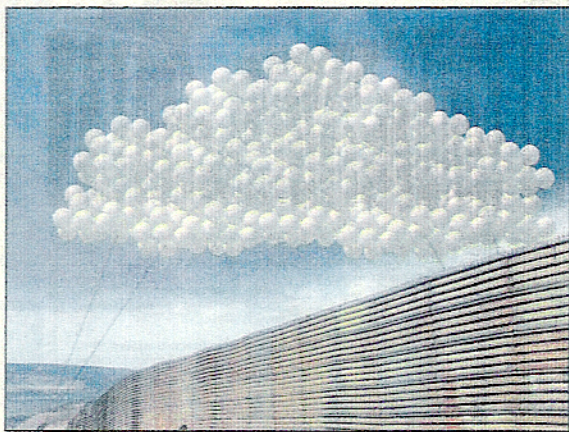


NIGHT & DAY

inSITE
for sore eyes

THE
ADVENTUROUS
CROSS-BORDER
ART EXHIBITION
RETURNS,
WITH ITS
USUAL PACKAGE
OF DELIGHTS



The many white balloons of "The Cloud," Alfredo Jaar's ceremonial event honoring people who lost their lives crossing from Mexico into the United States, will take place on Saturday at 10 a.m. in Tijuana's Goat Canyon and is envisioned here in a computer-generated image.

Installation

By Robert L. Pincus

ART CRITIC

The Tijuana Wax Museum soon will display full-size figures of Richard Nixon, Dante and Our Lady of Guadalupe. Thousands of balloons will float above the steel fence separating Tijuana from San Diego, while musicians answer each other from either side of the border. A series of locally produced short films will be shown in four windows of the old First National Bank building in downtown San Diego.

This is just a smattering of the art that will surface, beginning tomorrow, courtesy of inSITE2000. As with inSITE94 and inSITE97, the 34 invited artists and various collaborators have created 30 new works for the occasion, in San Diego and Tijuana. And like earlier incarnations of this unusual exhibition, this inSITE presents work by artists from many locales, including Sweden (the town of Umeå), Mexico City, New York and Montreal. inSITE has never been a conventional exhibition. Perhaps the only standard thing about it was that all works went on display and closed at the same time. Not so this year.

From the start, it required treks to locales where viewers and artists might not usually go — places like Tijuana's Colonia Libertad (home to stellar works in 1994 and 1997) and a warehouse in Barrio Logan (display space for Ruben Ortiz-Torres' and Sal Muroz's kinetic car sculpture, "Alien Toy," three

years ago).

This year is no exception. To see everything, you'll traverse neighborhoods in San Diego and Tijuana and even make a detour to Calexico and Mexicali. And once again, the sponsorship of the show is binational, with 27 participating institutions from both the United States and Mexico, led by Installation in San Diego and the Instituto Nacional de Bellas Artes in Mexico City. The co-directors of inSITE2000 represent both countries too: Michael Krichman is American and Carmen Cuenca is Mexican.

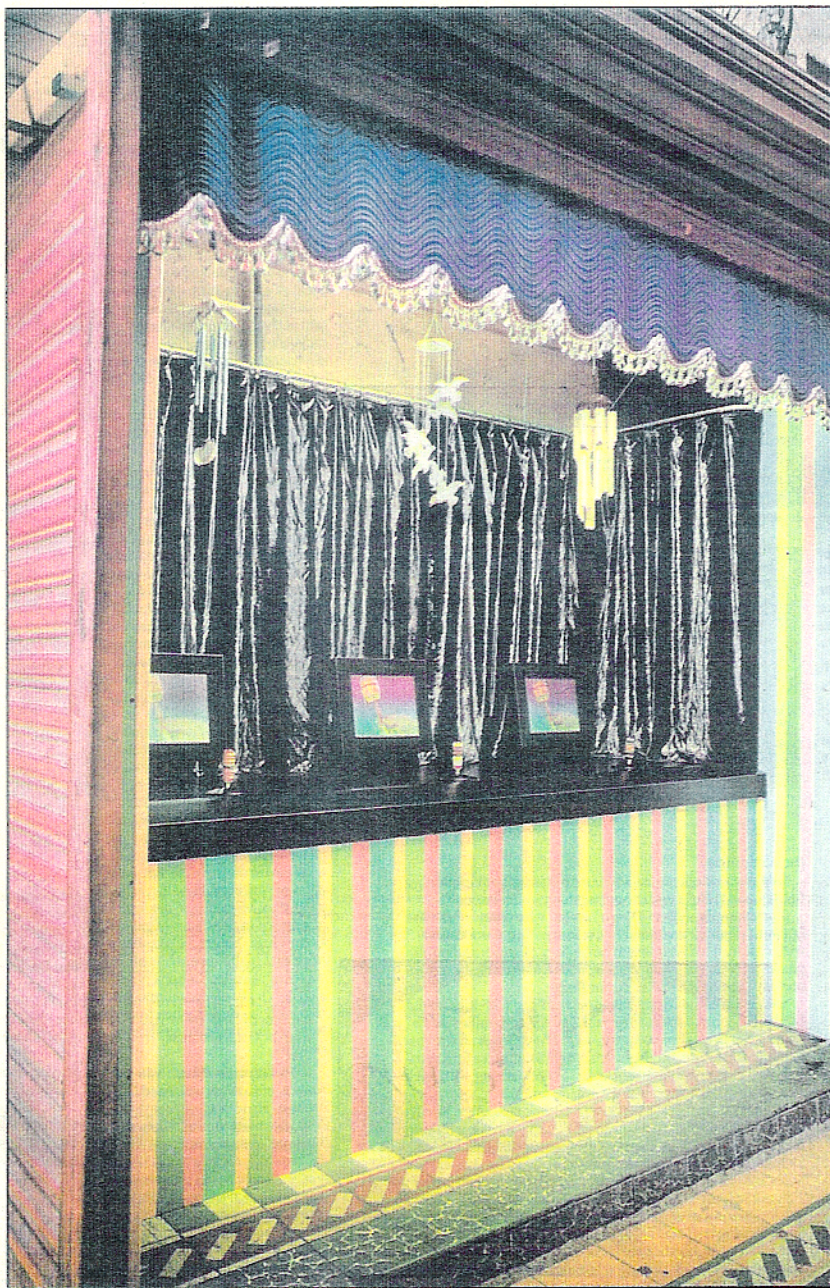
But there is a noticeable shift in the sorts of projects artists attempted this time around. In previous inSITE shows, the majority of works were objects or installations. This time, just as many artists as not have created videos, films or events — though only some of them premiere with the beginning of inSITE2000 tomorrow.

Another change of note about this inSITE: Projects will appear on a staggered time frame, which have as their opening dates tomorrow, Nov. 17, Jan. 19 and Feb. 23.

Among the event-style projects making their debut this first weekend is Alfredo Jaar's "The Cloud," source of the balloons above the border — on Saturday at 10 a.m., near the Playas de Tijuana on Avenida Internacional. It will be



The 45,000 or so cars that pass under Puerta Mexico, the oldest pedestrian bridge in the border zone, will see Arturo Cuenca's billboard, "You Are Aquí," with its large text laid over an aerial photograph of the surrounding landscape. Installation



San Diego artist Roman de Salvo has created a kiosk dubbed "Techno Balero" in Tijuana's Pasaje Gomez market, which contains screens — operated by joysticks — picturing a familiar wooden toy with a wooden barrel that can be flipped onto a hand-held stick. *Installation*

All the info that's fit to print

The in(fo)SITES, as they've been dubbed, will be the nerve centers for inSITE2000. The center in the Spreckels Building, 923 Fifth Ave., downtown San Diego, is open 11 a.m. to 5 p.m. In Tijuana, the center at the Centro Cultural, Paseo de los Héroes y Mina, Zofia Río, is open from 10 a.m. to 6 p.m.

Each is a point of departure, rife with notebooks on the projects and videos on some. And at each, you'll find the essential tool for all viewers — the bilingual inSITE2000 guidebook (for a suggested donation of \$1). It provides descriptions and dates for each project and the map that will get you there, if you should choose the self-guided method. Also listed: dates for various artist talks and for panels, as well as the inSITE2000 film series.

Organized tours are offered, too, though there won't be much available until the second round of Exploration Weekends, on Nov. 17-19. The third round will be on Jan. 19-21; the fourth on Feb. 23-25. One- and two-day tours will include transportation, lunch, an inSITE2000 guidebook and, of course, a docent. Call (619) 544-1482 or, in Tijuana, 6.684.0095 for reservations and prices.

At those same phone numbers, you can get general information on inSITE2000. The Web site — <http://www.inSITE2000.org> — offers nearly all of the information in the guidebook and additional facts about inSITE. It will be updated weekly.

There will be opening celebrations tomorrow night at the Reincarnation Project, 1061 J St. in downtown San Diego, and Saturday at the Centro Cultural. For information about tomorrow's bash, which begins at 7 p.m. and features music by Revelations, Gato Loco, Banda Gaya and Fussible, call (619) 544-1482 or (619) 235-8468. Tickets are \$15 in advance and \$18 at the door. The Saturday event, also at 7 p.m., is free, with a concert by Café Tacuba at 9 p.m.

Projects will debut with each Exploration Weekend. inSITE 2000 will close Feb. 28, 2001.

— Robert L. Pincus



Jeffrey Vallance (above, right), formerly of Los Angeles and now living in Sweden, collaborated with Victor Hugo Yanez of Mexico City to create life-size figures of Richard Nixon, Dante and the Virgin of Guadalupe for temporary display in the Tijuana Wax Museum. Installation

Local artist Lupita Guerrero (right), wearing a hat, poses with the Zerdugo Corral family in Tijuana's Maclovio Rojas community that participated in a project devised by São Paulo artist Monica Nador. Several families decorated their homes, with help from Guerrero and Nador, after exploring symbols of familial and cultural histories. Installation



inSITE

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 32

elegiac theater on a grand scale: "an ephemeral monument" is how the guidebook describes it. The Chilean-born artist, who lives in New York and this year received a MacArthur "genius" grant, will suspend the gathering of white balloons to commemorate those who have died trying to cross the border during the past decade. Relatives of victims and local activist organizations are among those Jaar has invited to witness and be part of the spectacle.

The same day, at 1 p.m., Gustavo Artigas from Mexico City is staging a "performance" in which two Mexican soccer teams play each other at the same time as two U.S. basketball teams compete at the Lazaro Cardenas High School in Tijuana's Colonia Libertad. It's part of a project called "Rules of the Game," in which balls will be provided, during the months of inSITE2000, for play on a newly constructed frontón court.

There is another difference in focus between inSITE 2000 and its predecessors, one that art historian and USD professor Sally Yard, the local curator among four, emphasizes. In 1997, there was a distinction made between Community Engagement projects and all others. The curators eliminated that demarcation, believing the thrust of the show is about establishing bonds between chosen artists and the populace. (Yard's colleagues are Susan Buck-Morss, a professor at Cornell University whose field is political philosophy; Osvaldo Sanchez, an art historian who directs Mexico City's Carrillo Gil Museum; and Ivo Mesquita, a widely known Brazilian curator who worked on inSITE97.)

"We wanted all of the artists to do sustained residencies," Yard explains, "to immerse themselves in some aspect of

the community.

"It's been a delicate balance to do this without exploiting the situation. But I feel the artists have succeeded."

For example, Alberto Caro Limón, who divides his time between Tijuana and San Diego, is creating a workshop with children that explores the history of parks and public places in Mexico. Their work will lead to the creation of a park in Tijuana's El Soler community.

São Paulo artist Monica Nador, working with local artist Lupita Guerrero, spent time with 10 willing families in Tijuana's Maclovio Rojas community. They explored the roots of each, ancestors and heritage, while looking to find symbols and signs representing both. Then working with each family, they decorated homes, inside and out.

Many of the projects, be they events or sustained involvements with families and communities, are meticulously documented. The place to learn about them will be a pair of information centers (another first for inSITE): one in the Spreckels Building in downtown San Diego and the other at Tijuana's Centro Cultural. They are a recommended first site for anyone who wants to make a pilgrimage to the far-flung locations of inSITE2000. Alternately, you just might run into one or another artist's creations in your daily travels; that would be in the spirit of the long-running exhibition, too, which aspires to merge art more fully with the flux of life itself.

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Pick of the litter

It would be presumptuous to prejudge what inSITE2000 projects will offer the most delights and substance. But here are four that seem to offer abundant promise:

• **"Blind/Hide":** Mark Dion, who has for many years transformed a passion for issues of the environment into compelling art, recently created an arresting diorama of a landfill environment for an exhibition at the Museum of Contemporary Art, San Diego. The Pennsylvania-based artist is back, with a "bird blind" at the Tijuana River Estuary full of photographs, charts, lists and other materials on the 370 species of birds that make use of the reserve.

• **"Most Wanted Painting":** Vitaly Komar and Alex Melamid, an inspired team since they emigrated to the United States from the Soviet Union in 1978, have always taken a wry, sometimes satirical and often affectionate attitude toward their adopted land. Our national mania for surveys has become fodder for their ongoing project in which they poll a city's populace and use the results to make paintings. San Diego and Tijuana get one each, which go on view at the San Diego Museum of Art tomorrow and the Tijuana's Centro Cultural on Jan. 19.

• **Wax people:** For two decades, Jeffrey Vallance has been the droll artist as anthropologist, creating gently absurd interactions with leaders of nations at the edge of the world stage (Tonga and Iceland) and casting a shrewdly funny perspective on all sorts of icons and symbols through drawings, paintings and writings. His site is the Tijuana Wax Museum. Working with a wax figure-maker from Mexico City, Victor Hugo Yanez, he's fashioned three that he believes the collection is lacking: Dante, Richard Nixon and the Virgin of Guadalupe. Seeing them and seeing why he chose them should provoke smiles — and thought.

• **"Picturing Paradise":** Valeska Soares, who is transplanted from Brazil to Brooklyn, currently has an evocative work in the "Ultra-Baroque" exhibition at the Museum of Contemporary Art, San Diego: a series of benches in beeswax with impressions of knees, dubbed "Sinners." Her new work for both sides of the border fence at Border Field State Park and the Playas de Tijuana sounds intriguing. It consists of stainless-steel, mirrored plates, with words from the marvelous, fabulistic prose of Italo Calvino. The chosen passage is from "Invisible Cities."

— Robert L. Pincus