

W O R L D
SCULPTURE NEWS

HK\$40/US\$4.95/
CAN\$6.50/£3.00

VOLUME 3 NUMBER 4 AUTUMN 1997



Public Spaces: InSITE97

**The Heart Of Wood: Wang Keping * The
Fourth Sculpture Biennale Ein Hod, Israel
* UCLA Sculpture Garden * Reviews**



Welcome to World Sculpture News

Public sculpture has been an important and an indispensable part of the cultural and social life of many cities in many different cultures in almost all periods of history. Ancient Greek and Roman cities had an extraordinary range of figurative and narrative sculpture both in the round and in relief that inspired both admiration and disdain. Modern cities have a different sculptural aesthetic and tone to them, however, and the work is also subject to praise and ridicule. Yet, whatever one may feel about modern and contemporary sculpture, the reality is that from Seoul to Chicago, from Tokyo to London and Paris, from Toronto to Singapore the range of sculpture, including site-specific works, is truly quite breathtaking and unique.

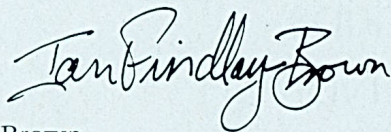
In this issue, the art of contemporary public sculpture is featured both in articles and reviews. The most significant—because it features especially commissioned work and a particularly sensitive geographical area—is that of *InSITE97*. Located on the Mexican/United States border in the cities of Tijuana and San Diego, *InSITE97* brought together a wide range of sculptors from very different backgrounds and cultural, social, and political influences. Their dynamic sculpture, installation, and site-specific art has delighted and fascinated many people. The dramatic presentation of their work makes it clear that the role of sculpture for public spaces is a vital contribution to understanding and appreciation of the world in which we live.

The *Munster Sculpture Project*, the third such event since 1977, also continues to explore various aspects of public sculpture in the city in the late-twentieth century. Where *InSITE97* had a border and two cities as locations, Munster is a single city and quite a conservative one. Another look at the role of sculpture and its place in a public environment—in this case, a river—was the Taiwan show *River: New Asian Art — A Dialogue in Taipei*. Here 17 Asian artists explored the theme of the river and its influence on modern Asian society. The *Fourth Sculpture Biennale Ein Hod*, Israel, an increasingly important event in the sculpture calendar, is another significant example of how public sculpture is seen through the biennale system.

While the public sculpture in the events in Germany, Taiwan, Mexico, the United States, and Israel is essentially temporary, the sculpture in gardens such as that featured in this issue, the UCLA Sculpture Garden, has a permanent sense to it. Yet, regardless of the differences in locations and the themes explored, the questions remain: Is public sculpture, in its widest possible variations, important? what influence does it have on how people see their world? is it worth the huge financial costs? and will it survive and prosper into the twenty-first century?

Also featured in this issue is the work of two Asian wood sculptors from very different social, political, and cultural backgrounds: Kiichi Sumikawa (Japan) and Wang Keping (France/China). Their beautiful wood sculptures reflect two very distinct and powerful statements, not only on the nature of wood as a sculptural material but on the great diversity of images that are possible.

As *World Sculpture News* moves into its fourth year of publication, I would like to extend my deepest appreciation to all the subscribers, readers, advertisers, and distributors for their support. I look forward to your continued support. And I wish everyone a happy and prosperous new year.



Ian Findlay-Brown
Editor/Publisher

World Sculpture News (ISSN # 1024-087X) is published quarterly by **Asian Art News, G/F, 28 Arbuthnot Road, Central, Hong Kong. Tel: (852) 2522-3443. Fax: (852) 2521-5268.** Please note that all editorial and advertising enquiries should be addressed to the Publisher, Asia-Pacific Sculpture News, at above address.

Subscription price for one year (4 issues): US\$17.50 for the US, US\$22 for Canada, £10 for the United Kingdom, £16 for Europe (excluding UK), HK\$140 for Hong Kong, and US\$30 for all other countries (postage included). **To subscribe** in the US, call (619) 747 8327. To subscribe in Europe, call (44) 0181 885-2447 or fax (44) 0181 365-0145, or write to The Mailing House Ltd., One Northumberland Park Industrial Estate, 76-78 Willoughby Lane, London N17 0SN, UK. To subscribe in other countries, call (852) 2522-3443 or fax (852) 2521-5268. US second class postage is paid at Rahway, NJ. POSTMASTER: **Send address changes** in the U.S. and Canada to Asia-Pacific Sculpture News, PO Box 301388, Escondido, CA, 92030-9955, USA. For address changes in other countries, send to Asian Art News, G/F, 28 Arbuthnot Road, Central, Hong Kong.

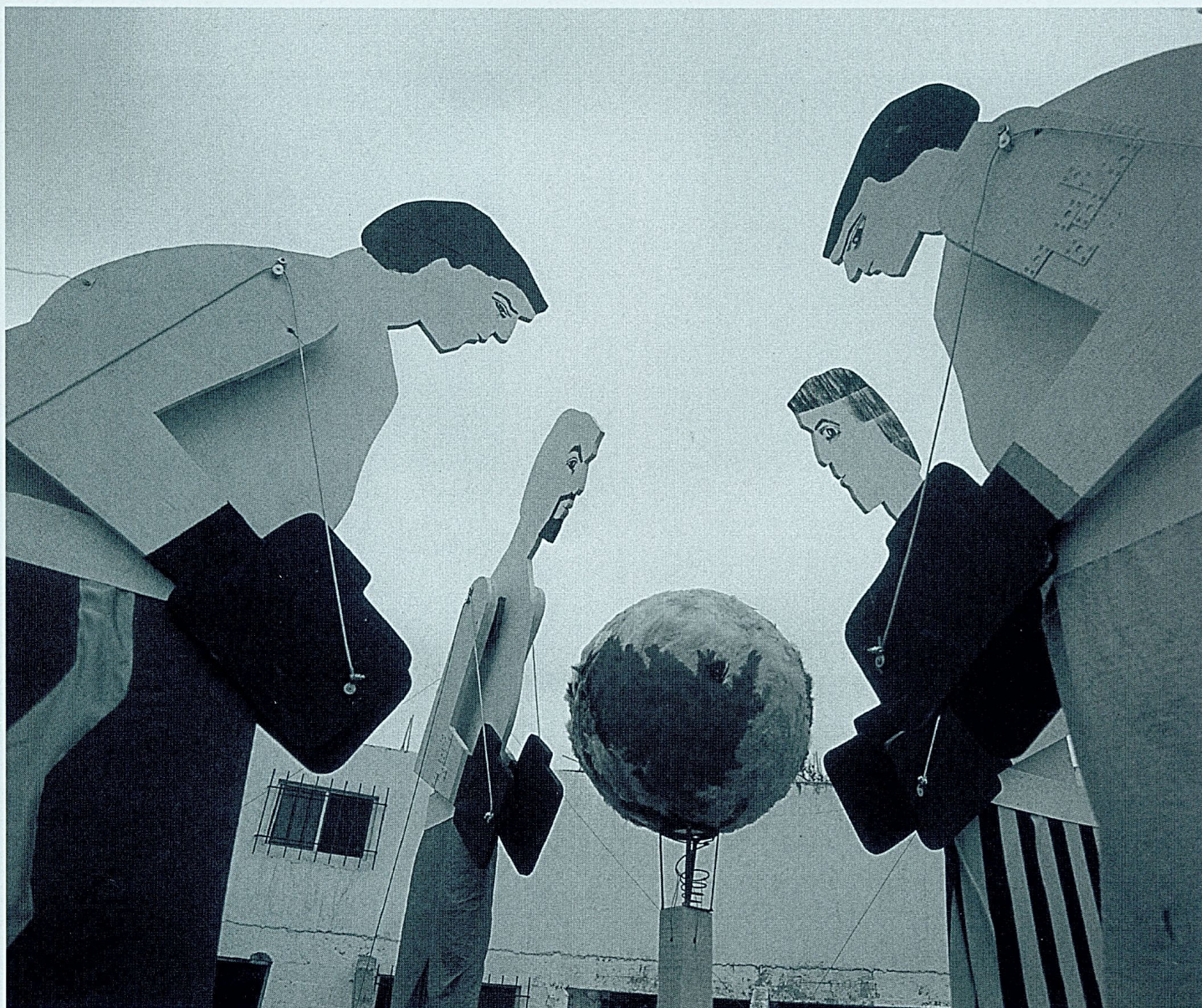
Colour Separation: Asia Graphic Output Co., Ltd., 2/F, CNT House, 118 Johnston Road, Wanchai, Hong Kong. Tel: (852) 2896 3823; Fax: (852) 2896 3717. **Printer:** Lammar Offset Printing Ltd., Flat C, 16/F, Aik San Factory Bldg., 14 Westlands Rd., Quarry Bay, Hong Kong. Tel: (852) 2563 1068; Fax: (852) 2811 3375.

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The Many Faces Of Public Spaces

Over the past five years, InSITE has presented a variety of dynamic site-specific sculptures and installations that, while delighting tens of thousands, have drawn attention to cross-cultural exchanges between the U.S. and Mexico.

By Collette Chattopadhyay



Manolo Escuita, **El Round Nuestro de Cada Dia** (installation view), 1997. *InSITE97* at Palenque, Cortijo San Jose near the Playas de Tijuana, Mexico. Photograph: Courtesy of Philipp Scholz Rittermann.

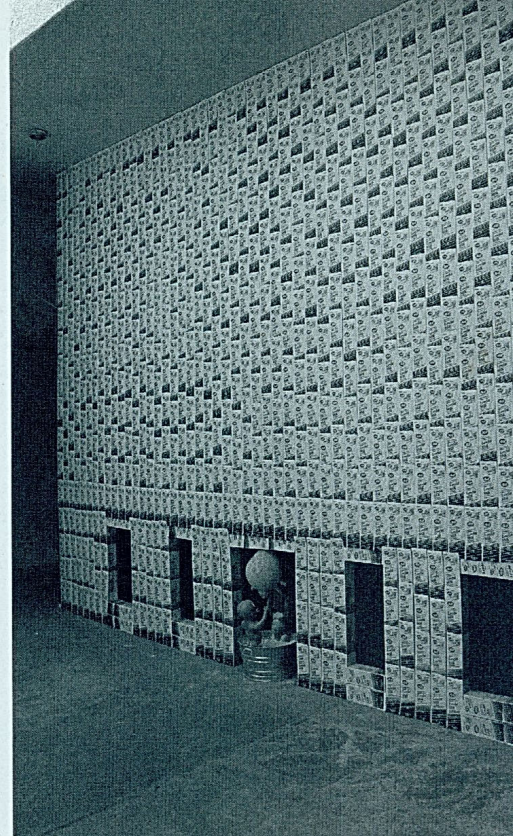
The young international art exhibition *InSITE97*, which premiered in 1992 and is now in its third season, once again presented installation and site-specific artwork in an array of public spaces throughout San Diego and Tijuana. The two adjacent cities, which share an international United States/Mexican border, staged opening celebrations on sequential evenings in late September, unveiling 42 commissioned works by over 50 artists from the Americas. Against the background of ongoing international border tensions that continue to persist in the region, close to two thousand people attended the opening reception in San Diego that featured a performance work by American artist Laurie Anderson entitled *The Speed of Darkness*. The subsequent evening in Tijuana, an estimated eleven thousand people congregated outside the Centro Cultural Tijuana, with nearly a thousand cramming into the Institute itself for opening festivities and a glimpse of *InSITE* works by six artists. At that location, artists Kim Adams, Ken Lum, Francis Alys, Jamex de la Torre, Pablo Bargar Lugo, Andrea Fraser, and Allan Sekula presented projects.

As in 1992 and 1994, this year's exhibition marked the culmination of months of collaboration amongst numerous institutions. In all, 26 non-profit and public institutions in Mexico and the United States sponsored projects and programs for 1997, under the collaborative leadership of San Diego's Installation and Mexico's Instituto Nacional de Bellas Artes (Na-

tional Council for Culture and the Arts). While the number of participating institutions and exhibited projects was down from 1994, when 38 institutions sponsored 74 projects, the overall dynamics of the 1997 exhibition suggested that *InSITE* is coming into its own. Various structural changes contributed to the freshness and energy inherent to this year's exhibition, with its most powerful strength coming from the works themselves.

Funded for roughly US\$1.5 million, *InSITE97* proved smaller and more cost-effective than its more established and splashy models such as the Venice Biennial, German Documenta, or the Brazilian Sao Paulo Biennial. Approximating in ambition to the younger global art bashes such as the Korean Kwangju Biennial, the Munster Sculpture Projects, or the American SITE Santa Fe festivals, *InSITE* distinguished itself from these by being both a residency and exhibition program. Rather than showcasing works previously featured at other venues and assembled for an international extravaganza, *InSITE* offered new projects and works as well as a chance to assess the results of site-specific responses to a defined exhibition theme. As a result, this young triennial delivered the edgy and rewarding surprises of finding art in unexpected spaces, coming upon new works by familiar artists, and becoming acquainted with the works of young and promising talents.

"We made a number of changes that were really significant this year," said Michael Krichman, the U.S. executive director of *InSITE97*. One of the most impor-



Helen Escobedo, Milk at the L'Ubre Mooseum (detail), 1997, installation, mixed media including cardboard cartons. *InSITE97* at the ReinCarnation Project, San Diego, California. Photograph: Courtesy of Shubroto Chattopadhyay.

tant was the establishment of an overriding curatorial theme that set more defined parameters for this year's event. In 1994, as Krichman explains, "Each collaborating institution established their own curatorial direction." This time, at the prompting of numerous participating institutions, four curators were selected to establish a unified theme for the exhibition projects. The team, which included Jessica Bradley (Canada), Olivier Debroise (Mexico), Ivo Mesquita (Brazil), and Sally Yard (USA), settled on the topic of public space. Discussing this theme, curator Debroise said, "We felt that the region itself was extremely dense and complex and that it would stimulate the artists' interests." More specifically, as Yard in turn suggested, "The conjunction of Mexico and the United States, of Tijuana and San Diego, dramatizes the multiplicities of publics" inherent to the notion of place, that catalyzed the theme of *InSITE97*.

Also central to this Triennial, however, was a more subliminal shift in emphasis in favor of a North-South geographic axis with invitations for participation being extended solely to artists residing in the Americas. Different from previous years, *InSITE97* reined in the formerly undefined geographic parameters that had characterized this exhibition. Indeed, in the 1992 and 1994 exhibitions, a number of strong works by European and Japanese artists were profiled including pieces by Noboru Tsubaki, Antony Gormley, and Ulf Rollof in 1992, and by Yukinori Yanagi, Rolf Julius, and Andy Goldsworthy in 1994.



Christina Fernandez, Arrivals and Departures (installation view), 1997. *InSITE97* at the Mexico/United States international border crossing between Tijuana and San Diego. Photography: Courtesy of Philipp Scholz Rittermann.

Looking To 2000

Michael Krichman, executive director/US for InSITE97, discusses this year's Triennial with World Sculpture News correspondent Collette Chattopadhyay in San Diego.

From your perspective, what important changes have occurred in this year's exhibition?

The structure of collaboration in *InSITE94* between institutions in Mexico and the United States was fairly loose, but for 1997 we had a very direct partnership with institutions in Mexico, particularly the Instituto Nacional de Bellas Artes in Mexico City. This time they were equal partners in the exhibition in terms of organization and funding. That shift, in turn, dictated other changes. Last time, each institution that was collaborating established their own curatorial direction. This time—and it was really a consensus of all the participating institutions—we have a more disciplined and defined curatorial structure. At an early stage, we brought four curators—Ivo Mesquita, Sally Yard, Jessica Bradley, and Olivier Debroise—into the project. They had curatorial autonomy to select artists, but then, somewhat unexpectedly, they became involved—and delightfully so from our perspective—in all aspects of the project in terms of the exhibition and even the education and public programs. We also decided to give residencies to the artists for *InSITE97* and this was another important shift. The artists were selected roughly a year and a half before the exhibition and part of their commission involved a series of short-term residencies to the region. Another major shift is the community engagement programs that have incorporated a large number of regional artists into the developments of programs for *InSite*.

What was the total budget for InSITE97?

We look at it as a three-year budget and the number is roughly US\$1.5 million. That's for three years and includes the exhibition, the residencies, staff, and a significant component of community edu-

cation and engagement programs. A portion of that, of course, is covered by in-kind donations. Aeromexico, for example, has given probably fifty thousand dollars worth of airline tickets, so those come off that budget. In one way, we will spend less cash than that, but in another sense it's really the collaboration and the partnership [with institutions and sponsors] that allows us to do this project for so little.

I understand the Mexican structure for arts funding is somewhat different from the US structure.

In Mexico there is significantly more public

nificant in our education programs), the Andy Warhol Foundation—quite unusual for them to give us a second grant as they funded us in 1994, the Peter Norton Family Foundation from Los Angeles, and the Angelica Foundation in San Diego. That in turn helped us with our own board, several of whom gave six figure gifts, and also with corporations here.

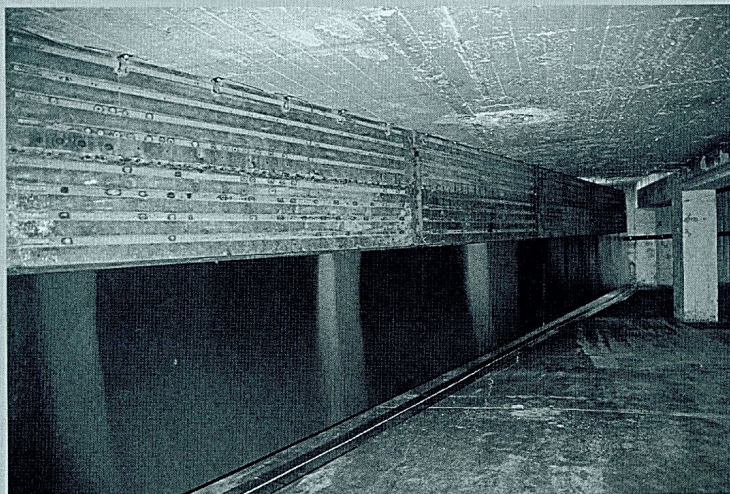
What are the success of this show and what do you feel was incomplete or unachieved this time around?

I would like to have had the Vito Acconci piece completed for the opening, but that will get done. We're hoping the waves will die down, because we have to drive tubes into the ocean floor. It's a very complex engineering project, but we're committed to doing it. There are quite a few strong works in this exhibition, and quite a few examples of where artists have really stretched within their own work. I think Thomas Glassford has done a sensational work, and Fernando Arias did one of his best works, as did Ruben Ortiz Torres.

It's interesting that this year's event blends emerging and established artists.

Who do you see amongst the emerging group that stands out?

Thomas Glassford fits in that category. Gonzalo Diaz, the Chilean, did a sensational neon piece. Rosangela Renno, who did the photo mural works, is known, but I think that she's someone who is really coming onto the scene quite strongly. Certainly, Marcos Ramirez ERRE with the horse has done it again. He did strong work for 1994 and he's done it here. Betsabee Romero, the young Mexican artist who did the car, [created something] really unexpected in terms of previous work. The presence of someone like Vito [Acconci] on the project is very important because he is a significant figure in this discourse. And others like Judith Barry



Fernando Arias, *The Line* (installation view), 1997, mixed media including found corrugated metal fence. *InSITE97* at the ReinCarnation Project, San Diego, California. Photograph: Courtesy of Shubroto Chattopadhyay.

support for the arts generally and the whole notion of private sector fundraising is something quite new. In Mexico, generally, roughly one-third of the dollar commitment was covered directly from the federal budget for the arts. The remainder was private sector fundraising. We were very fortunate in Mexico, particularly in the corporate sector with corporations like Aeromexico, Telmex, the telephone company, and some private individuals. In the United States, a large percentage of our budget came from national foundations. We received a grant early on from the James Irvine Foundation for US\$150,000, which provided the bridge from 1994 on, allowing us to go forward. Then, the Rockefeller Foundation came in, the Nathan Cummings Foundations (very sig-

who again, I think, did a fantastic piece.

There are a number of technological pieces in this year's exhibition. Does that have to do with money, or simply with the freedom of artistic choice?

I can guarantee it doesn't have to do with money, and Judith [Barry] is a perfect case. Judith's piece cost US\$10,000, even though there's US\$100,000 worth of machinery in there. Judith wanted to do this piece, and she was able to get loans of projectors from New York. So we leveraged a lot of things.

This year's North-South focus, in terms of artist selection, hadn't occurred in the past. What is your impression of the relationship between the curatorial theme of public space and the North-south dialogue?

It was one mechanism for reining the project in, but it was also a sense that this is a juncture of the Americas. Olivier Debrouse's curatorial line is that "the border is there like it or not." I think that the Americas is relevant without going too far with it. We were also trying not to load the question because then you get a predictable answer. The way this exhibition approaches public space is interesting. Rather than trying to do works in public space, one strain of works in the exhibition ends up being about the way these artists have intervened in public space. That's where someone like Lorna Simpson comes in, or Francis Alys whose project was a trip around the world and exists in a postcard, or several projects that exist on the Internet or have Internet components.

What are the plans for the future?

The plan is to do *InSITE2000*. From my perspective, the successes in the exhibition have a lot to do with the artists spending time in the region to develop their projects. Again, I think the curatorial structure is something we would want to maintain, along with certain parameters. We will probably say, yes, this is a residency-based project, and that the Americas is a big enough place to play with. Again, it's a question of funding, but I would certainly love to see some of our community-engagement education programs sustained throughout the entire three years. I think the institutions in Mexico, particularly the Instituto Nacional de Bellas Artes, is interested in continuing with the partnership, which would be essential. Δ



Louis Hock, *International Waters* (installation view), 1997. *InSITE97* at the Playas de Tijuana, Mexico. Photograph: Courtesy of Philipp Scholz Rittermann.

This year's show, by contrast, seemed to underscore the significance of the San Diego/Tijuana exhibition site as a juncture of the Americas. Reflecting on these changes, curator Debrouse welcomed the international cognizance lent to emerging Latin American artists, emphasizing the event's visibility and importance in Mexico and South America. With a slightly different focus, Yard emphasized that one of the strengths of the finished exhibition was "the connectedness of the artists," and whose works exuded "a pervasive alertness" of the present moment resonating against one another in strong and interesting ways.

Established talents anchoring this year's exhibition included, among others, New York artists Vito Acconci and Lorna Simpson, the Mexican doyenne Helen Esobedo, and the Belgium-born Francis Alys who resides in Mexico. Acconci, who came to prominence in New York during the early 1970s, was a seminal presence in this year's event. His piece, *Island on the Fence/Island in the Tide*, approached the nexus of public space and politics and was tellingly situated at the conjunction of the Pacific Ocean and the international border. Unfinished for the opening weekend due to high ocean tides that delayed its completion, his drawings, which were presented in the show's succinct, 72-page *InSite97 Guide*, proposed two small islands, one of earth and the other of water, straddling the border. Conceptually lyrical and adroit, the water island in particular suggested

analogies between the ebb and flow of the ocean waves and those of cultural overlap and interface. In contrast to the absolute division of land, culture, and heritage inherent to the rigid border fence, Acconci's proposal suggested a more fluid conception of identity and space.

The artists Louis Hock, Christina Fernandez, Marcos Ramirez ERRE, Kim Adams, Francis Alys, Fernando Arias, and Judith Barry also evoked works that specifically addressed the border's presence. Louis Hock, chairman of the Visual Arts Department at the University of California, San Diego, constructed a communal drinking fountain situated along the border fence, fed by a single underground well. Wryly call *International Waters*, this work featured faucets on both sides of the border that provided drinking water to thirsty visitors. While emphasizing the commonalities of human need, this site-specific piece also suggested an array of subtly nuanced political issues related to the nationalistic divisions of natural resources.

Approaching the interstices of art, public space, and politics with a different strategy, the emerging Colombian artist Fernando Arias constructed a massive sculpture entitled simply, *The Line*. Extending the rhetoric of Minimalism, Arias transformed a huge found segment of the border fence into a massive razor-edged wedge sculpture that hung suspended from the ceiling. Ominous in its monumental scale, weight, and density, this work's razored edge hung inches above the floor, threatening to split the exhibition in two. Infusing the Minimalist rhetoric with political intensity, *The Line* intimated the impos-

ing and menacing nature of border politics.

Other artists chose to approach the *InSite97* theme of public space by probing what curator Yard called, "The thresholds between public and private experience." Exploring these areas, New York artist Lorna Simpson exhibited a video entitled *Call Waiting* that presented snippets of garrulous, private telephone conversations in Chinese, Punjabi, Spanish, and English. Staged against the grandiloquence of public settings, this work subliminally explored the tension between private and public voices. More pointedly, however, it parodied technology's dual usage to both engender and efface privacy. Mimicking mass media news and entertainment footage, *Call Waiting* underscored the relentless mass media obsession with exposing private affairs for public consumption.

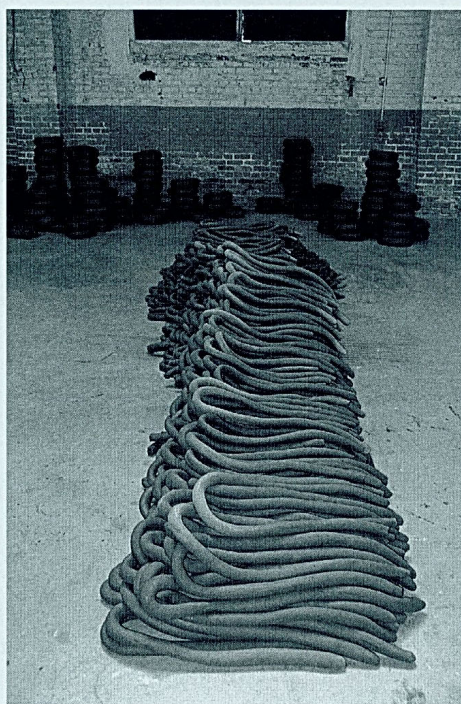
Equally concerned with the concept of identity as related to private discourse within public space were works by artists Gary Simmons, Nari Ward, Daniela Rossell, Miguel Rio Branco, Patricia Patterson, Betsabee Romero, and Ruben Ortiz Torres, among others. The promising young Mexican artist Daniela Rossell, for example, presented unusual, large molar-like pieces that probed the relationship between private dental health and public advertising in the sister cities of San Diego and Tijuana. Critiquing the advertisements found in both cities for reasonably priced dental work in Tijuana, as curator Yard suggested, Rossell's work exposed and explored the interstices of public space, commercial advertising, and the highly private arena of dental health. In contrast, New York artist Gary Simmons used a more poetic approach to explore the nexus of individual and community space. In a now defunct baggage storage area of a train depot building, Simmons presented *Desert Blizzard*, a video that showed an airplane drawing snowflake patterns in the sky. Those immense, yet ephemeral personal gestures, seemed to underscore the circumscribed finitude of personal and artistic gestures in the more enduring realms of public space. With a related sensibility of nostalgia, personal apprehension and displacement, the Brazilian artist Miguel Rio Branco presented *Between the Eyes, the Desert*, a highly poetic and melancholy work. In a large darkened room, Rio Branco featured dissolving projected images of faces and landscapes sequenced in poetic overlays. Suggesting the mirage-like worlds of memory, longing, and dreams, the whole



Deborah Small, *Rowing in Eden* (detail), 1997, installation. *InSITE97* at the Santa Fe Depot, San Diego, California. Photograph: Courtesy of Shubroto Chattopadhyay.

of which was accompanied by a musical score written by the French composer Erik Satie.

In contrast to these works, two young artists, Betsabee Romero and Ruben Ortiz Torres, chose independently to explore the automobile as a site of public-private space. Set into a steep embankment, Romero's *Jute Car* was painted with a lush floral exterior and strewn with dead roses inside. While alluding analogically to the automobile's promises of mobility,



Anna Maria Maiolino, *There could be many more than these* (installation view), 1997, forms made of paper. *InSITE97* at the Children's Museum, San Diego, California. Photograph: Courtesy of Shubroto Chattopadhyay.

change, and freedom, this dead-ended car also poetically suggested the death of such dreams. By contrast, the Los Angeles artist Ortiz Torres employed a humorous, rather than poetic, approach in his *Alien Toy: Unidentified Cruising Object*. Fusing the love of cars, motion, and speed with a video projected from the interior of his transformed low rider, he celebrated with technological wizardry the personal and collective dreams of adventure, opportunity, and freedom associated with cars. Fusing high art interests with American advertising, television, and even movies, this work was both playful and sophisticated.

In contrast to the optimistic mood of Ortiz Torres' work, the seminal talent Helen Escobedo and her collaborators Alberto Caro-Limon, Armando Lavat, and Franco Mendez Calvillo raised the complex issue of the cultural construction of public identity and public space. In a three-room suite, they compared

and contrasted cultural interpretations of milk, utilizing this subject as a metaphoric mirror to suggest the shifting axes of social difference that exist between cultures. Despite its jocular veneer, this work was rife with a deep skepticism of cross-cultural interchange, which was premised in the expressed fundamental difference of emphasis endemic to the most ordinary things of life. Related issues of cultural difference were raised by the Canadian Kim Adams who constructed a two-headed tricycle allegedly capable of pulling in opposite directions simultaneously. Illustrating the incongruence of nationalistic goals and ambitions, this work challenged the dreams of cultural hybridism, suggesting by visual analogy that such fusions are fraught with irreconcilable differences.

With similar concerns, Marcos Ramirez ERRE and his Tijuana artist-collaborators Hugo Josue Castro Mejia, Javier Galaviz Sanchez, Jose Julio Orozco Garcia, and Alejandro Zacarias Soto situated a 30-foot-tall wooden horse at the Mexico/United States border crossing. Updating the ancient Bronze-age Greek tale of the Trojan horse, mythically presented as a gift to the city of Troy but clandestinely used to enter the town and to seize military victory. *Toy and Horse* suggested ways in which issues of identity and cultural invasion frame the daily rites of border passage. While humorous and engaging on one level, this work presented particularly deep suspicions regarding the narrative of cross-cultural equanimity and progress.

In contrast to these charged notions of the cultural construction of public space, artist Thomas Glassford, born in the

Tracing Currents

Olivier Debroise, one of the four curators for InSITE97, is a writer, art historian, and director of an alternative arts space in Mexico City known as Curare. Here he shares some thoughts on InSITE97.

How did the thematic curatorial framework for this event evolve?

On of the first things we decided among the four curators was not to impose any theme to the show. We felt the region itself was extremely dense and complex and that it should stimulate the artists' interest. We did not want to make a border show, because we didn't want to have a discourse on top of a discourse that has already been done in the past. And we didn't want to impose a discourse on something that already had its own narrative. But we insisted that in order to have the artists react to the specificities of this region, of these two cities—of these two countries—the artists be invited to take up residencies in the region for as long as possible. Of course, this implied that the artists travel and live here if not for an extended period, at least for a substantial period of time. I think the results of the show are visible.

I was struck by the number of technological works presented in this year's InSITE. How do you feel these elements played into the discourses of public space that were central to this year's exhibition?

In the beginning, we suggested that the artists might consider addressing television and the press as a public space. We discussed photography as a medium having tremendous public effect. Actually, however, we were surprised that so many artists chose to work in a video format, Internet format, or to utilize newspaper and photo-based concepts in their work. I think the technological aspect is interesting because it makes a switch from construction or installation type work and moves towards a new understanding of public art works.

Miguel Rio Branco's work uses multiple projectors with dissolving images that use slightly older technology than, say, the video presentation that was very cutting edge by Judith Barry. The con-

trast made me wonder, in our technological world, if preference is subliminally shifting in favor of the more technologically sophisticated art. Is technological prejudice or preference influencing the viewing of art at the end of the 20th century?

I don't see technology as the sub-secret for talent. So, I don't really care. Some kinds of works are just more of an art kind.



Thomas Glassford, *City of Greens* (installation view), 1997. InSITE97 at the ReinCarnation Project, San Diego, California. Photograph: Courtesy of Shubroto Chattopadhyay.

Some of the imaginative work at the Playas de Tijuana (Tijuana Beach) is for me as interesting as Judith Barry's extremely bright and sophisticated video display.

From the Latin American point of view, what seemed to emerge as significant at this exhibition?

A number of the Latin American artists were young, even younger than the North Americans. In general, I think that's re-

vealing of what is going on in the Mexican or Latin American scene where there is a new generation of artists that are aware of different things. But also for other reasons, even budget reasons, some artists were given an opportunity here to develop much more complex works than they would have in their own countries. Of course, they jumped at the opportunity and that was very good. I'm thinking of artists like Miguel Calderon who did a video piece that he's been waiting to do for many years. But, as a young artist, and he's one of the younger artists in the show, he didn't have the opportunity or financial resources to do that work prior to participating in InSITE. Thomas Glassford is another example. He was able to develop a video piece, which is something he hasn't done before.

I want to return to your comment regarding a new generation of artists that you see emerging in Mexico and Latin America. Can you be more specific as to what directions you see emerging?

If one looks carefully at the Mexican selection of works, you'll see, for example, lots of humor. Most of the Mexicans are extremely funny. There is, for example, Ruben Ortiz Torres' car or Daniela Rossell's extremely bizarre display of molars, or whatever. The approach of these artists was through humor, being critical in a sense that is very different from the older generation that was addressing similar issues but in a more poetic way. I don't like to make much of these kind of generalizations, but this is a very clear difference at this point.

In what ways do you feel the cross-cultural dialogue implicit in this event has been successful and in what ways does it remain stymied or misconstrued?

That's a very hard question and I'm not sure art is the perfect tool to answer these questions.

[Collette Chattopadhyay]

Grounds For Serendipity

Sally Yard, part of the curatorial team for InSITE97, is a writer, art historian, and professor in San Diego, California. In addition to her work on InSITE97, she has curated numerous exhibitions including: Shadow of the Bomb, Images of Self, and Christo: Oceanfront.

As one of the four curators involved in shaping InSITE97, what compelled the thematic emphases of this year's InSITE and how did these evolve?

After InSITE94, a stocktaking process occurred that involved a wide spectrum of people who had been involved with that project. Consistently it surfaced that certain 1994 projects, like Silvia Gruner's or Marcos Rameriz's projects, had fascinated people. Silvia Gruner's project, for example, led not just to the piece itself, but into places you hadn't had a reason to go and therefore created a search through a city that you came to know in a different way. Clearly, those works wove themselves into the neighborhoods where they were placed, touching a layered reach of people, and that resonated with the critical mass of the collective effort of InSITE.

Gradually the idea of focusing on civic space emerged as an idea that touched something loaded and interesting in the region. Interesting in any place in the world, but especially potent here because there is such a flagrantly complex array of publics here due to the conjunction of these two large, growing cities that are so intertwined and so divergent. So, public space emerged as a powerful focus with the possibility that artists might discern all kinds of unexpected public spaces, maybe very intimate public spaces, where public and private have a threshold between them.

In addition to the thematic notion of public space, another simultaneous discourse seems to have been built into InSITE97, which is the North America/South America dialogue. How do you see these interrelating?

One of the things that the conjunction of Mexico and the United States, of Tijuana and San Diego, dramatizes is the multiples of publics, intrinsic to any neighbor-

pletely different set of concerns than someone arriving from Toronto or wherever—but that those might be very interesting to butt up against each other.

What was your sense of this cross-cultural dialogue?

I was struck by how electronic media and technology means there is a pervasive alertness throughout the world to what has happened in the past, and what is happening everywhere. It was interesting to see, for example—despite all that is local to the experience of the artist [in terms of individual background and context]—the connectedness of an artist from Chile with an artist from Vancouver. Not because their experiences were the same or even because the issues they focused on were the same, but there were points of connection and understanding in a way that was resonate.

There was a lot of technologically sophisticated art in this year's exhibition. In what other ways do you feel technological emphases made this exhibition distinctive?

Bruce Nauman was once asked about why his work was all over the place, you know, he would use his body one day and make a cast the next. He said that when he was working with an idea, there was a form that was right for that idea. So, on one level, that suggests that the same artist may work in a material or virtual way, depending on what they're doing. But, there were



Marcos Ramirez ERRE, *Toy and Horse* (installation view), 1997. InSITE97 at the Mexico/United States international border crossing between Tijuana and San Diego. Photography: Courtesy of Jimmy Fluker.

hood, city or town. The idea that there is a public is a myth, in some sense. Though there are undoubtedly common shared parts of experience, there are also always unique and particular experiences. In addition, as a hemispheric axis, this conjunction of the Americas struck us as an opportunity to probe the ways in which our futures are intertwined in some hemispheric sense, in ways we can't be sure of. Again, we were thinking not that we would find sameness of experience—there's no doubt that someone arriving here from Columbia comes with a com-

also a number of younger artists in this exhibition and amongst a youngish generation of artists, electronic possibilities are second nature. Rather than picking up a pencil, they may pick up a video camera. It's second nature to their way of taking in the imagery of the world. So, on another level, from Jenny Holzer onward, there's also been the recognition that technology becomes an access into audience. If you're going to critique, for example, the way that popular imagery frames things, you've got to critique it on its own terms, rather than in the form of a 14th century manuscript. Also the element of time that can be introduced using video films is important, probably because it slows you down, and changes your state of mind and perception.

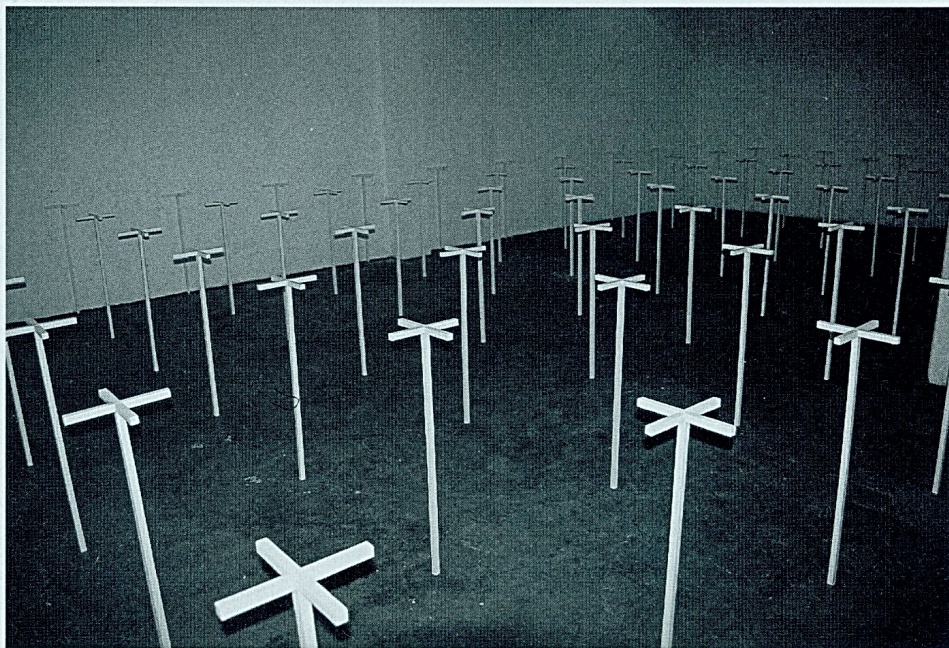
What was most successful for you about this event?

What really is valuable in the project has to do with the process of all this unfolding. It has been a truly collaborative process—at time groping, at times smooth—in a very complex sense ranging from the organizations to the coordinating institutions in Mexico and the United States through to the artists. What also struck me as marvelous is the range of strategies artists have developed. The residences were initially collective ones and in a certain way it was incredibly unwieldy. We went around exploring together in vans and I thought it might be a nightmare for them, but I realize, in retrospect, they forged wonderful connections.

I assume most of these projects are created solely for the duration of this exhibition. Can you address the transitory quality of these works?

Part of it operates free of the burden of having to be forever. If something is going to be permanent, it operates or lives in a very different kind of way; it has more responsibilities to change and to time. This is a two-month exhibition and the projects operate as gestures or interventions that torque your thinking in a wonderful way that remains as a recollection that is enduring. It becomes part of an enduring memory which is sometimes more powerful than a physical reality. Sometimes something remembered can be more powerful than something that remains and gets tattered. Δ

[Collette Chattopadhyay]



Quisqueya Henriquez, *Untitled* (installation view), 1997, forms made of paper. *InSITE97* at the Children's Museum, San Diego, California. Photograph: Courtesy of Shubroto Chattopadhyay.

United States and living in Mexico City, explored the contemporary equivalencies of ancient walled gardens. In a sequence of works unveiled at various *InSITE* locations, Glassford presented multiple manifestations of a work entitled *City of Greens*. Whether presented tucked within a briefcase, set upon a tire, printed onto a door-mat, or incorporated into a video, this work explored and exposed the mythic seduction of utopian concepts of public space transformed in the 20th century into golf courses that continue to be some of the most popular destinations in modern cities.

Contemplating these explorations of public space was a work entitled *Rowing in Eden*, presented by San Diego artist Deborah Small who worked in collaboration with U.S. artists William Bradbury, Dana Case, and Patricia Mendenhall. Shifting discussions of public space to a feminist dialectic of patriarchal structures, this work revisited the historical realms of pre-modern Europe. Focusing on the herbalists who became known as witches, this installation attempted to unmask the patriarchal narratives that historically resulted in innumerable tortures and deaths. While stunning both in its rich colors and poignant herb aromas, *Rowing in Eden* situated its explorations of patriarchal power outside the realm of the present, relegating its emphases to the space of the past, and thus defusing the intended impact of redressing the social marginalization of women. Nonetheless, Small and her collaborators presented one of the few projects to approach the rich issue of the sexuality of public space, utilizing feminist strategies to explore the thresholds between public and private existence.

Forceful, dynamic, and at times

even humorous, *InSITE97* thus presented an array of artistic dialogues that felt cogent and relevant to the contemporary moment. In situating projects in public spaces, this exhibition continued to redress the elitist notion of contemporary art that first gave birth to the concepts of earth and site-specific art in the United States beginning in the late 1960s and early 1970s. Presented at the border, on beaches, hills, plazas, and street corners, as well as in older gentrified and often non-art related buildings, *InSITE97* accentuated the relevance of contemporary art for the general public. Sponsoring residencies and building cross-cultural collaborations that resulted in the two-month-long exhibition, this triennial also fostered the development of interpersonal relationships, engendering new understandings of public spaces and identities. Attempting to move beyond the multiple problematics that have frustrated the unfolding of cross-cultural discourses in the 1990s, *InSITE97* emphasized the building of collaborative projects amongst artists, curators, organizers, and the public. Seeking a conceptual arena large enough to encompass difference, yet focused enough to acknowledge our intertwined futures, *InSITE* judiciously continues with each manifestation to reinvent and reformulate its directions and emphases. Already preparing for the year 2000, organizers plan to continue to foster new, creative, and unexpected artistic works that wrestle convincingly with the ongoing dilemmas, enigmas, and hopes for human coexistence. Δ

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