

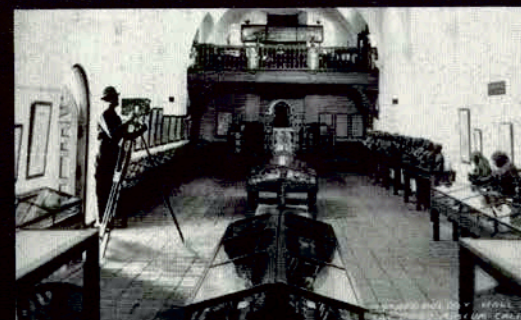
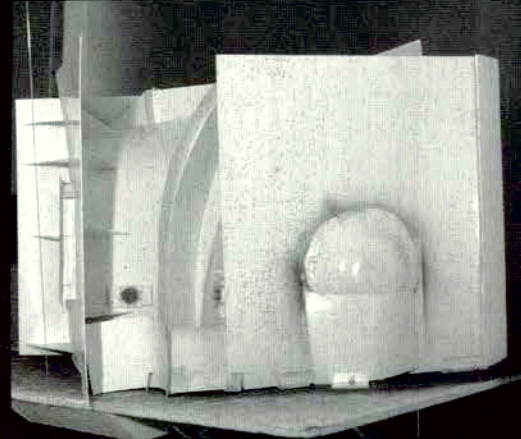
# "SCIENCE OF MAN EXHIBITION" 1915

Panama-California Exposition declares July 7th to be LYMAN HOWE DAY!



"Under the direct supervision of Lyman H. Howe, the biggest producer of travelogue motion pictures in the country, pictures were made from automobiles at the Panama-California Exposition yesterday afternoon which will be given to the city in care of the San Diego County Historical Society for safe keeping for fifty years. The inscription with the pictures provides that in 1965 the pictures may be removed that those of a long time in the future may see something of San Diego's 1915 celebration....  
—San Diego Union, July 8, 1915

"Scores of San Diego children were in the reels taken yesterday and if all goes well with them they may see the pictures when they are shown fifty years hence....  
With the pictures of the Panama-California Exposition, Howe also has given the historical society another reel of pictures recently taken in the Panama Canal Zone. As the Exposition is given in celebration of the completion of this work, he thought it fitting that the reels should be preserved together."  
—San Diego Union July 8, 1915



Howe films "Science of Man" exhibit at the Panama California Exposition—the world's largest exhibition of physical anthropology. Here you can see more than 200 human facial casts and busts of the world's human family in all its variations regarding age, race and sex. 90 heads and torsos were made from life-castings—the oldest living model a 114-year-old woman who was once a slave.



Dr. Ales Hrdlicka, head of the entire exhibit and curator of physical anthropology at the Smithsonian, stands among his collection in the display, "Man's Variation." San Diego generously paid Dr. Hrdlicka \$100,000 to create the exhibit.



Dr. Hrdlicka shows Lyman Howe the collection of female busts in the "Man's Development" display of the exhibit.



## disLOCATIONS in Southern California History

"What is said here about time is also valid, consequently and by the same token, for history, even if the latter can consist in repairing, with the effects of conjuncture (and that is the world), the temporal disjoining. "The time is out of joint": time is disarticulated, dislocated, dislodged, time is run down, on the run and rundown, deranged, both out of order and mad"—Jacques Derrida, *Specters of Marx*

### TIME OUT OF JOINT

In *disLOCATIONS* we set out to write history as displacement. To dislodge and dislocate the viewers' normal viewing habits and to hold off, at least for the moment, the desire to use history as a way of repairing the uncertainty and "temporal disjoining" of our time. Nevertheless as we dis-locate the viewers' temporal bearings, we also seek a reconsideration of certain specific local histories, and how these histories have been, or might be represented.

This process of dislocation and reconsideration gathers together three formal and conceptual concerns. These are: 1. the deployment of "archaic" forms of representation as critical tools: dioramas, newsreels and picture postcards; 2. two events associated with the revolutionary aims of the Industrial Workers of the World, both of which occurred just prior to the Panama-California Exposition: first the little known Tijuana Revolution of 1911, and second, the San Diego Free Speech Movement of 1912; and 3. the rhetoric of progress and technology of the world's fairs, in particular the Panama-California Exposition of 1915 in San Diego.

### THE INSTALLATION

*disLOCATIONS* consists of 4 miniature dioramas and 8 "filmstrips." Each diorama is mounted behind a 4x4 foot semi-transparent plastic panel. Flanking either side of each panel is a 1x4 foot enlarged "filmstrip," also mounted on plastic. The dioramas and filmstrips are suspended from the ceiling on wire cables allowing them to float 3 feet above the gallery floor. The viewer can pass in between and behind the dioramas to get a "backstage" glimpse of each *mise en scene*.

*disLOCATIONS* takes the viewer on an imaginary journey with the now obscure newsreel producer and entrepreneur, Lyman Howe. In the first 20 years of this century before mass movie theater entertainment existed, before small film companies gave way to media monopolies, Lyman Howe, a native Pennsylvanian, was "America's foremost traveling motion picture exhibitor." In 1915, his company did film the opening of the Panama Canal and one day of the Panama-California Exposition which named that day in his honor. He then gave these films to the city of San Diego which subsequently lost them. *disLOCATIONS* liberally reconstructs the setting and scope of Howe's undertaking here in Southern California. Our dioramas and "filmstrips" depict settings from the "recovered" Howe newsreel.

### Newsreels and Postcards

"Movies changed our world forever. Henceforth, history would be screened." —Gore Vidal, *Screening History*

By 1911 newsreels and picture postcards had become a popular form of early mass media. Competition among the many small newsreel companies and postcard photographers led to creative invention. Many of the earliest newsreels and postcards were produced using props, altered photographs, or false captions to embellish or fabricate documentation of events. Entire scenes were often recreated in order to replace shots either missing, too unbelievable, confusing, or just plain boring.

Following this convention, *disLOCATIONS* uses digital technology to insert Lyman Howe's camera crew into images of these historical events (taken from postcards of the period) and then strings these together into "newsreel" strips. This dis-ruption of an allegedly authentic representation reflects our view that "history" is always a process of construction both for the participant and the observer—a narrative without closure.

### Dioramas

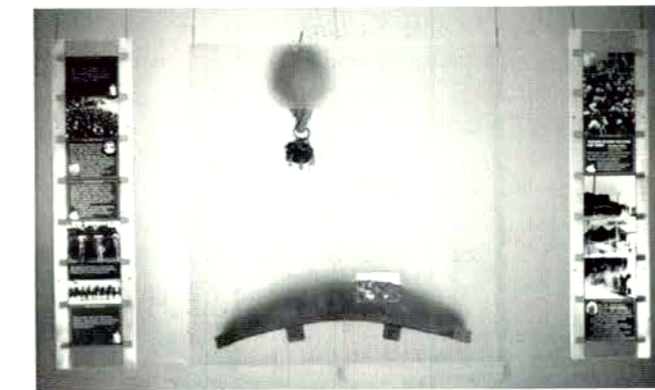
"The memory has as many words as the temper, and shifts its scenery like a diorama." —George Eliot, *Middlemarch*

The diorama invites our gaze into its fantasy only to remind us that we can never fully enter the domain of the work. While one is visually "inside" the diorama, there is an awareness that to physically

enter the space of the diorama would also be to dissolve its deception. In this sense the diorama is as much about loss and desire, authenticity and artifice, as it is an "escape" or retreat from the immediate present.

In *disLOCATIONS* we deploy a number of tricks that enhance this push and pull, this seduction and exposure of illusory space. The first of these procedures was to use a milky, semi-transparent plastic panel in front of each diorama. At key places the panel is left totally transparent allowing the viewer to "peek" into the illusion of the tableau. But all around this window within a window one can glimpse the workings of the illusion itself: the rivets, structural supports, the unfinished surfaces—all of the normally hidden mechanisms of the diorama.

A second trick we used to alert the viewer to the theatricality of the diorama and its construction of history was the inclusion of miniature movie cameras and equipment inside each *mise en scene*. This appearance of the newsreel crew at each historical juncture again questions how the presence of early media altered the authenticity of events before they became "historical" documents.



### TOURING HISTORY:

#### The Tijuana Revolution of 1911

Our miniature movie lot tour begins in Tijuana in 1911. The viewer peers into a diorama of a classroom of what is now the Casa de la Cultura in downtown Tijuana and sees a children's ballet class in progress. While the youngsters do their pirouettes and coupes, outside the window Howe's intrepid camera crew is filming the armed insurrection known as the "Tijuana Revolution."

The Tijuana Revolution was a brief event in the Mexican Revolution which spanned the decade from 1910 to 1920. Ricardo Flores Magon, who was expelled from Mexico in 1904, had been working for more than a decade to overthrow the Mexican dictator Porfirio Diaz. Magon founded the socialist/anarchist party, Partido Liberal Mexicano. In 1911 his supporters joined by IWW members or Wobblies (see below) planned to start a more radical revolution in Baja California. On May 10th, these "insurrectos," a force of 200 adventurers and idealists, drove the outnumbered Mexican Army troops (*Federales*) out of Tijuana. The hope was to spread and radicalize the Mexican revolution. That did not happen. Rebel demands for an 8 hour workday, unionization, a \$1.50 minimum wage, and land reform failed to galvanize the local Mexican population. From his party headquarters in Los Angeles, the theoretician Magon proved unable to provide the rebels with either practical leadership or financial assistance. In less than a month, the *Federales* recaptured Tijuana. Rather than face firing squads, the "insurrectos" fled across the border where the U.S. Army arrested them and took them to Fort Rosecrans in San Diego.

For his part in the Tijuana Revolution, Magon received a jail term of 23 months for violating the U.S. neutrality laws. Magon spent his life in and out of jails for his political activities and died in Leavenworth Penitentiary in 1922.

#### The San Diego Free Speech Movement of 1912

"The turmoil marked a critical moment in San Diego history, for it inclined the city's political posture to the right, where it remains." —Paul J. Vanderwood, *Writing History with Picture Postcards*

In our second diorama the viewer is carried aloft with Howe several months later as he tries to document the riots which broke over the banning of free speech in San Diego in 1912. Howe is inside the gondola of a hot-air balloon with his movie camera perched precariously over the basket's side.

The Wobblies imprisoned at Fort Rosecrans after the Tijuana insurrection, were soon released onto the streets of San Diego. There they renewed earlier efforts to unionize city employees and transit workers.

The IWW began in 1905. An amalgam of unionists, socialists, anarchists, its program (anarcho-syndicalism) was to unionize the unorganized: women, minorities, immigrants, Mexican Americans, and the unskilled (ignored by craft unions like the AFL) and to form one big union whereby workers would control the means of production. Many Wobblies were itinerant laborers or hoboes who rode the rails in search of work.

In cities all over the nation, the IWW used the soapbox to organize. In response, cities banned public speaking. Nationwide, Wobblies and their supporters protested against the bans and were arrested by the hundreds, swelling city jails. Nationwide police and vigilante groups founded by local businessmen were martialled against them. San Diego's Free Speech riots were bloodier than most. By June, the IWW was driven out of town and construction of the Panama-California Exposition could proceed without further disruption.

### THE PANAMA-CALIFORNIA EXPOSITION OF 1915

"The purpose of the Panama-California Exposition is to illustrate the progress and possibility of the human race, not for the exposition only, but for a permanent contribution to the world's progress. One phase of the exhibit would be the gathering together of the representative tribes of North and South America in what might be called a Congress of the native tribes of the Western Hemisphere." —Director of the Panama-California Exposition, General Collier, 1911

### "Pueblo Village" and "Science of Man Exhibit"

Our miniature tour next locates Howe's film crew at the fairgrounds where dozens of Pueblo Indians are about to arrive as anthropological "specimens" for the 1915 Panama-California Exposition in Balboa Park. The Santa Fe Railroad Company which sponsored the "Pueblo Village" or "Painted Desert" exhibit brought in trainloads of Pueblo peoples living near its rail lines in New Mexico. The men from the San Ildefonso Pueblo arrived first in order to fabricate an ersatz pueblo-style Indian village on the fairgrounds. In a column entitled "Toiling Redskins Glad to Labor on Structures in 'Painted Desert'" the San Diego Union of May 8th, 1914 reported:

"[The men] have been at work on the 'Painted Desert' in the row of houses which they are to cover with adobe...The Indians are headed by a peaceful looking brave who wears, among other garments, a gorgeous beaded vest. His hair is worn in two long braids on the tips of which are fastened strips of fur. He is an exhibit in himself."

After leaving these human "exhibits" behind, our last diorama takes the viewer inside one of the housed exhibitions at the Panama-California Exposition. In this display we find Howe's newsreel equipment left standing after a long day's shooting. Surrounding the cameras are numerous plaster heads cataloging an assortment of human "types." These heads were life-castings made by the prominent anthropologist Dr. Ales Hrdlicka of the Smithsonian Institution in Washington, D.C. Hrdlicka was paid the enormous sum of \$100,000 (equal to \$1 million today) by the city of San Diego to create the world's largest exhibition of physical anthropology.

### CONCLUSION

"Virtually all subsequent fairs [after 1867] embodied these two aspects: displays of industrial achievement and progress for the regional or national metropolis, and exhibits of primitive "others" collected from peripheral territories or colonies." —Curtis M. Hensley, *The World as Marketplace*

Those world's fairs, which regularly occurred every few years until World War I, structured exhibits around this dichotomy: on the one side, the pre-industrial world envisioned as a past-time soon to be absorbed into the world market or soon to vanish; and on the other, the industrial world. The two sections of San Diego's anthropology exhibits: the living exhibits located in the commercial strip and Dr. Hrdlicka's collections, housed in the main fairgrounds, followed this model. San Diego's fair modeled itself after the Chicago World's Fair of 1893. Chicago's fair featured an outdoor exhibit of Native Americans and like the San Diego fair, it exhibited Mayan architecture and artefacts in its Anthropology Building. Chicago's fair itself copied the Paris Expositions of 1889 and 1867 which had displayed industrial progress alongside exhibits of primitive peoples and their "villages."

*disLOCATIONS* uses and dis-locates the form of this classic world's fair dichotomy. The "Pueblo Village" and the Hrdlicka room both correspond to that half of the world's fair which displayed the exotic "other" as living specimen, scientific object, or sideshow soon to be absorbed or overcome. But our two other dioramas, instead of praising the coming of a triumphant industrialism, present something very different. The scenes of the Wobblies reflect a different form of utopianism, one that was in opposition to the techno-utopian claims of capitalism.

In the postmodern present, there is a sense that the drama of history has concluded, that the present now continues on indefinitely, and that conflicts of class, race, and gender are gradually disappearing into the hegemony of the world market, the international culture of commodity production and consumption. Similar to the grand narrative of the world's fairs, this formulation appears to be supported by the recent collapse of the so-called communist world.

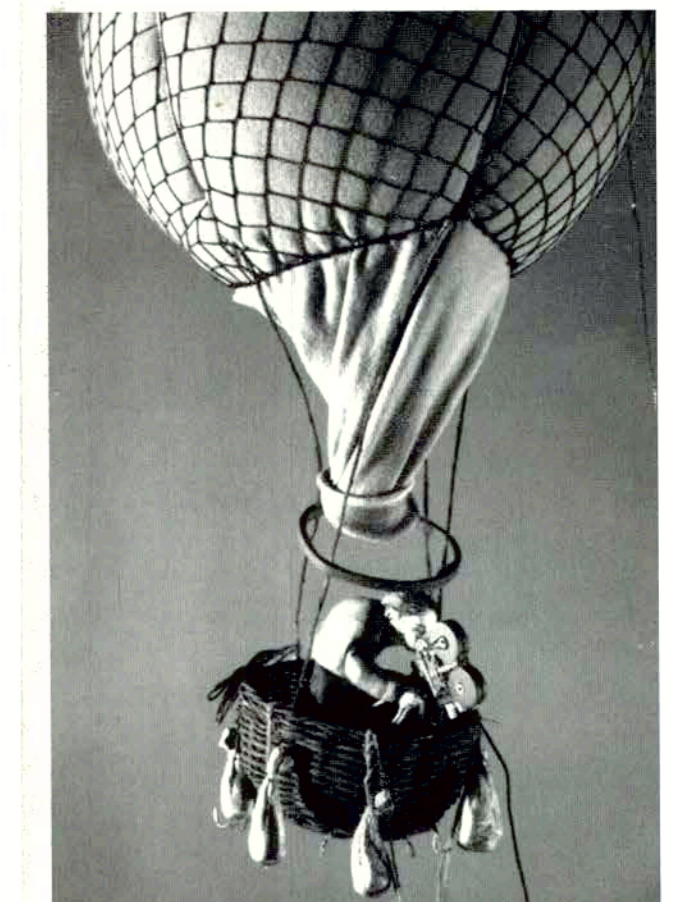
But despite the sunny forecasts of these bygone industrial exhibitions, the "other" has not ceased to exist. Large areas of the so-called third world are slipping ever further into poverty and disease, pockets of impoverishment and illiteracy are growing within the United States, and recent uprisings in Chiapas, for example, all indicate that the world's fair model of industrial progress has not been, and will never be, brought to completion.

By combining such archaic representational forms as dioramas and newsreels with the modern technology of digital imaging and polymer plastics, *disLOCATIONS* produces a hybrid of history and art, documentary and fiction that is made possible at a time such as this—a time out of joint.

Janet Koenig and Greg Sholette, May 1995

Janet Koenig and Greg Sholette are visual artists living in New York City. They are members of the REPOHistory Collective and have collaborated on numerous installations and public art projects.

*disLOCATIONS* was first shown at the Visual Arts Center Gallery, University of California, San Diego in the region's biennial exhibition, *inSITE94*, from September 27–October 30, 1994



**disLOCATIONS**  
an installation by  
Janet Koenig & Greg Sholette

