

Bay Area Now 4

*Untitled (Fountain)*

2004

Acrylic on panel

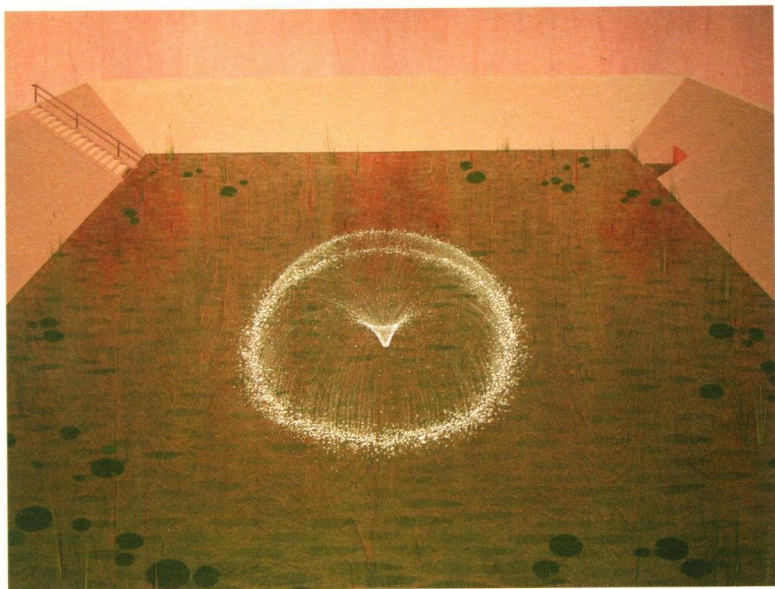
36 x 48 in.

*Collection of Javier Peres*

*Photo: courtesy of Peres Projects, Los Angeles*

## chris ballantyne

The trees look lonely in Chris Ballantyne's paintings. They stand marooned on five square feet of spindly grass that peeks through a concrete sea of a parking lot. A stretch of lawn looks equally sad, the only vestiges of green lying in the truncated paths of inadequate sprinklers as most of the grass yellows under the sun. The clean aesthetic of Ballantyne's landscapes is reminiscent of the compositions in Japanese woodblock prints, yet their seeming order is upended by sinister elements of fantasy that could almost be lifted from a Dr. Seuss book. Ballantyne uses minimalism to its full effect to lend character and absurdity to our modern-day repertoire of earthworks and backyards. His imagery profiles dams, jetties, pools and fences that have materialized out of nowhere, waiting to serve a function that is not yet clear, for a population that does not yet exist. "Build it, and they will come," seems to be the order of the day, yet construction and planning appear to have gone topsy-turvy somewhere down the line.





*Untitled*

2005

Digital photograph

15 x 10 in.

*Courtesy of the artist*

## tommy becker

Tommy Becker is a spoken-word and multimedia artist whose raw poetics meld with a collage of found and stock video footage. What may otherwise appear as sentimental vignettes offered by the stock images turn strange and absurd through Becker's edits, music and textual narrative. Becker uses carefully orchestrated cadences, repetitions and pauses in his delivery to achieve the unexpected, especially when striking odd juxtapositions of word and image. His video *Animal, Animal* reads as an homage to our feathered and furred friends, those living in the wild as well as in captivity. As Becker chants "animal, animal," images of swinging baboons and waddling birds flash across the screen, and his poetry slowly unfolds into a free-associative rant about human sprawl. Becker will present a series of single-channel video installations for *Bay Area Now 4* and will conduct live spoken-word performances in front of his work during the run of the show.





*Kate Spade Bags*

2005

Paper, acrylic and hot glue

Dimensions variable

*Courtesy of the artist**and Heather Marx Gallery, San Francisco***libby black**

Known for her paper replications of prized consumer goods such as Hermès Hustler King Roller Skates and Louis Vuitton luggage, Libby Black co-opts symbols of consumerism and style in her work. Past projects have re-created pet objects such as the Hummer, a Chanel surfboard, a custom Burberry skateboard with a Powell-Peralta emblem and the interior of an entire Louis Vuitton store. For *Bay Area Now 4*, Black will construct a streamlined replica of a Kate Spade store, complete with hand-made copies of products, mood lighting, potted plants and a special soundtrack. This boutique-within-the-gallery is modeled after the Kate Spade store located in San Francisco's Union Square shopping district. Black's work succeeds in making an astute comment on the intersection of art, fashion and commerce, collapsing the distinction that may exist between a high-end retail object and an art object. By reconstructing accessories by hand from fragile materials, she absolves them of their use value and turns them into one-of-a-kind objects of fine art, thereby exaggerating their original intent as mere status symbols.





*Welder*

2005

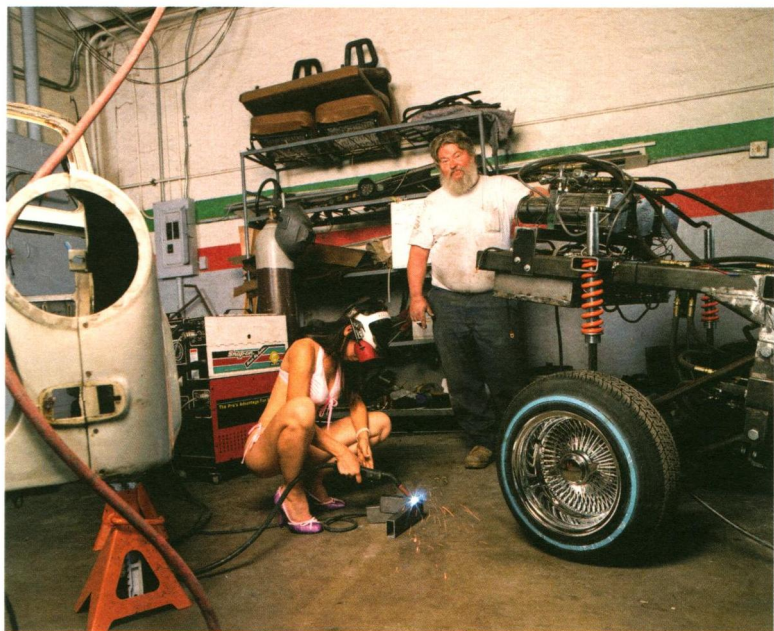
C-print

50 x 60 in.

*Courtesy of the artist  
and Modern Culture, New York*

## **liz cohen**

Liz Cohen has been working on her ambitious *BODYWORK* project since 2002. While on an artist's residency in Germany, Cohen purchased an East German Trabant, an affordable, proletarian car that was the equivalent of a Dodge Neon during the late communist era. Cohen's long-term vision entails transforming the dull and boxy Trabant into a sleek, bucking, bouncing El Camino. The completed, metamorphosed machine will tour the circuit of low-rider contests up and down the West Coast. In addition to constructing a low-rider masterpiece—a car that's judged as much by its surface appeal as its performance—Cohen has been transforming her own physique into an object of desire. She intends to enter one of the bikini contests that are the entertainment highlights of low-rider shows. Dividing her time between the garage and the gym, she alternately welds and buffs the auto body and pumps and preens her own. With *BODYWORK*, Cohen attempts to transgress her outsider status in relation to the male-dominated subculture of low-riders while facing various challenges in her attempts to gain legitimacy and acceptance for herself in this field. For *Bay Area Now 4*, she will present a selection of self-portraits posed with some of the fascinating people she has worked with over the course of her initiation into the world of low-riders.



*Untitled*

2005

Paper and ink

24 x 18 x 8 in.

*Courtesy of the artist*

## adriane colburn

Adriane Colburn crafts delicate cut-paper maps that follow various trajectories, from genealogical charts to irrigation channels. Recent installations have documented geographic networks that service and make up modern societies. Colburn's site-specific project for *Bay Area Now 4* traces San Francisco's sewage system and links the pipes that serve the Center's buildings to the labyrinthine network of sewer lines that eventually discharge into the ocean. In his essay "Excremental Journey," Ralph Rugoff describes how the Hyperion sewage treatment plant in Los Angeles is society's great equalizer: "In Hyperion's primary sedimentation tank," he writes, "your shit meets the Reagans', and nobody's waste gets special treatment."<sup>1</sup> Colburn attaches like-minded sentiment to San Francisco's sewage system, viewing it as an intimate network that connects the city's people together.

1. Ralph Rugoff, *Circus Americanus* (New York: Verso, 1995), 50.





*The Wall* (detail of a wall painting at Rx Gallery)

2004

Mixed media

20 x 60 ft.

*Courtesy of the artists*

## gestalt collective

Jazz may be one of the most difficult forms of artistic expression ever invented. It relies on a musician's ability to respond on the fly to the artistic gestures of others. Another aspect of jazz makes it a particularly American form: it springs from a democratic process that calls for a common goal to be reached through consensus and individual contribution. Gestalt Collective is the visual arts equivalent of a jazz ensemble. This group of painters has been creating improvisational, collaborative murals for the past four years. The membership shifts from project to project, with as many as eight artists participating in a work to as few as three. For *Bay Area Now 4*, Scatha G. Allison, Nome Edonna, Ezra Li Eismont, Alex Eremian, Sirron Norris and Ricardo Richey will execute a major site-specific work in the two weeks before the exhibition opens to the public. While a basic structure begins the process, Gestalt Collective members improvise soon after the framework is set, each responding in free association to the marks and imagery laid down by the others. Unlike a typical music group, however, each Gestalt member is also a solo artist in his or her own right, with a distinctive style and an independent career. The artists come together for a variety of personal and professional reasons, the most compelling of which is the understanding that individual practice can be buoyed by the genius of a group.





*Diplomacy*

2003

Oil on canvas

20 x 16 in.

*Collection of Gregory Miller*

*Photo: courtesy of Ratio 3, San Francisco*

## robert gutierrez

Robert Gutierrez employs a hallucinogenic color palette to paint amorphous planet-scapes and shadowy underworlds. Hazy atmospheres and liquid skies throb overhead as organ-shaped entities and abbreviated body parts perch, nestle and roll over craggy rock formations. The human figure is hinted at and sometimes made perceptible within Gutierrez's compositions, but in such a way that it is always swallowed up by its surrounding elements. Although the paintings may seem to reference a futuristic, sci-fi aesthetic, Gutierrez is actually influenced by the shamanism derived from the spiritual practices of ancient civilizations and the animism that informs the indigenous beliefs of his native Filipino heritage. Every entity appears to carry a spiritual presence in Gutierrez's paintings, from rocks to plants to human and animal forms, and their auras seem to bleed across the picture plane as their shapes metamorphose freely into one another.



Jason Roberts Dobrin

7:30 am, 2004

Gelatin silver print

20 x 16 in.

*Courtesy of the artist*

*and Hamburger Eyes Photo Magazine*

## **hamburger eyes**

*Hamburger Eyes Photo Magazine* is a photography journal founded by brothers Ray and Dave Potes, along with Stefan Simikich, at their Burgerworld Media office/crash pad in the Twenty-Fourth-Street corridor of San Francisco's Mission District. The title of the magazine comes from a slang term referring to how one looks upon an object of affection. The trio and their collaborators edit, design, distribute and occasionally contribute their own photos to this up-and-coming publication. Other contributors range from young photographers submitting their first offerings to associates living in different parts of the country and the world to veteran photographers such as Ted Pushinsky, known for documenting the urban street life of San Francisco in the 1970s. The journal's mission is to chart the unseen aspects of everyday existence and, as the organizers put it, to mark "the continuing story of life on earth." Flipping through an issue of *Hamburger Eyes* reveals photos of airborne men dropping into waters far below, the bloody streets of Guatemala, a porn shoot in an anonymous suburb, sick city pigeons, drunken party antics, street fights, the World Trade Center disintegrating on 9/11, underwater scenes of surfers caught in mid-wave and scuba divers chasing whales and manta rays. In its straightforward ability to chart the rawness of daily life, *Hamburger Eyes* is reminiscent of the work of mid-twentieth-century photographers such as Garry Winogrand and Robert Frank. What the collaborators of *Hamburger Eyes* have accomplished is the creation of a potent vision for the world that is at once poignant, familiar and unrelentingly strange.





*Untitled* (portrait of the artist)

2005

*Photo: Gretchen LeMaistre*

## john hattori

John Hattori is not a trained, professional artist, but a substitute teacher who has traveled the world extensively. Through a circuitous route, Hattori finds himself a resident of San Francisco's Mission District, an area that prides itself on its strong identity as a utopian fusion of artists, bohemians, intellectuals, leftists, immigrants and the working class. The Mission can be described as an independent village within the city of San Francisco. The city hall for this enclave is Sixteenth Street's Adobe Bookstore, a used bookshop operated by the affable Andrew McKinley. The shop also runs the Back Room Gallery, headed by Eleanor Harwood. Hattori's video project, *One Minute Portraits*, on view in *Bay Area Now 4*, comes out of his experiences at Adobe Bookstore. This project began as a series of short video documentaries about individuals who called Adobe home. The project later expanded to include others not technically part of Adobe's orbit, but people Hattori became acquainted with through his friendships in the Adobe circle. Hattori has come to realize that, while his work initially intended to celebrate a community, the mini video portraits are in fact an accumulative description of the artist himself as reflected by relationships he has formed with those around him.



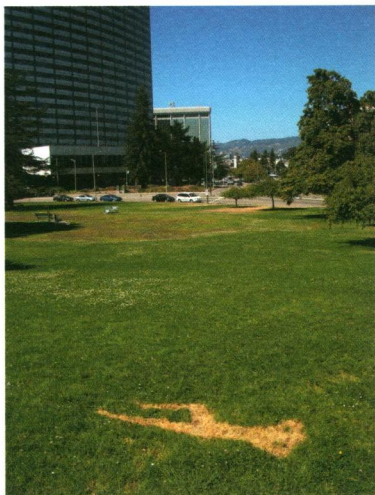
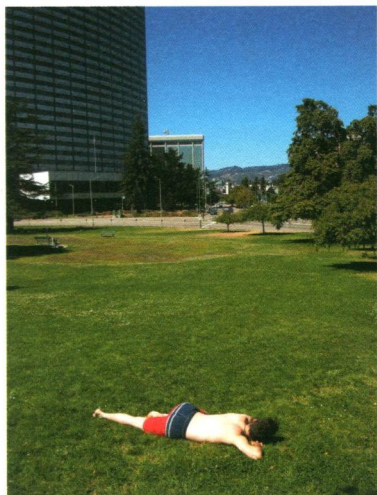


*Burn**(documentation of a site-specific performance)*

2004

*Courtesy of the artists***marisa jahn & steve shada**

Marisa Jahn and Steve Shada's collaborative works often reference the nature of mutual participation. Jahn and Shada's approach to making and presenting art is also evidenced in their work as curators and cofounders of Pond, a grassroots nonprofit art organization dedicated to generating experimental visual art in a critical and accessible environment. Based in San Francisco, Pond's objective is to showcase cutting-edge public art that ultimately expands the notion of public space to include situations, events and incidence. With the intention of generating interactions between gallery visitors at *Bay Area Now 4*, Jahn and Shada will present a series of wearable musical instruments that allegorize human relationships. The suits, incorporating aspects of minimalism, situational sound sculpture and prosthetic accessories, transform gallery goers into walking, breathing musical instruments. The catch, of course, is that the suits won't function properly if one wears them alone. Gallery goers must put themselves in compromising poses with others, while working together to strike a syncopated rhythm, in order to reap the acoustic rewards of their outerwear. The installation holds the promise of engendering moments of intimacy through the collaborative act, as well as exploring themes of interdependency and trust.



*Fibonacci Clock*

(collaboration with Jeff Kao at The LAB, San Francisco)

Latex on wall with wood and 1 rpm motor

96 in. diameter

*Courtesy of the artist*

## xylor jane

Xylor Jane sees the world in pattern. Her colorful, grid-shaped drawings and paintings are structured by systems, in particular pi, prime numbers, gematria and the Fibonacci sequence. The Fibonacci sequence is a series of numbers that constitute the building blocks of some of nature's most perfect forms (the growth patterns of buds on trees, the spiral rows of pinecones, the sand dollar, the starfish and the petals on various flowers, to name just a few). In effect, Jane paints by number, approaching her abstract compositions with a set of rules to translate numerical expressions into visual form. Variables such as the colors, sizes and shapes that make up the grids are determined by the assigned numbers. Using the spiral to order the location of each numeral, Jane discovers the patterns her equations yield as they grow out clockwise from the center. Their intricate configurations slowly materialize through the artist's highly methodical process of exploration.





JJ Larue

1980

35mm slide projection

Dimensions variable

*Courtesy of the artist*

## jim jocoy

Photographer Jim Jocoy brought his camera to all of the punk rock clubs and shows he went to in San Francisco and Los Angeles during the late 1970s and early 1980s. He then proceeded to photograph the showiest (not to mention the most strung out) punk rockers who agreed to mug for the camera. Selections from this body of work, which numbers upwards of a thousand pictures, were compiled in the title *We're Desperate*, published by powerHouse Books. Clearly inspired by the panache of these kids in their chains, lime green tights and zebra stripes, fashion guru Marc Jacobs wrote the introduction to Jocoy's book. The legendary Sid Vicious makes an appearance in one of these pictures, as do former Dead Kennedys lead singer Jello Biafra, cult filmmaker John Waters and Bay Area artist Bruce Conner. Other faces captured in Jocoy's photos may seem somewhat familiar, if a bit harder to place. Twenty-five years after the fact, Jocoy tracked down as many of his former subjects as he could and re-photographed them. The exhibition includes a selection of the early photographs along with the contemporary portraits, offering a then-and-now display, of sorts, of the Bay Area's punk rock community.





*My Mom Sent Extra Underwear for You*

2003

Forty care packages sent to students by parents and loved ones

Dimensions variable

*Courtesy of the artist*

## helena keeffe

Helena Keffe is part of a growing circle of artists whose abiding concern in making art is to address some of the key questions about American society, namely its disintegrating community structures and the pervasive alienation that threatens our social fabric. In addition to commenting on these societal conditions, Keffe attempts to bridge the gap between the art world and the lay public. Some would argue this gap is widening for a variety of reasons, primarily the simple fact of art education's disappearance from public schools. For *Bay Area Now 4*, Keffe presents an audio tour based on interviews with family members, friends and associates of artists in the exhibition. Her *Familiar Audio Tour* bypasses the traditional notion that only art experts with detached authority have the relevant insight to help viewers gain entry into the works before them. With this project, Keffe offers an opportunity to see that experiencing and making art is not necessarily a solo act.



*Full Metal Jackets, I (detail)*

2005

Twenty-eight speakers, LED monitor, custom software

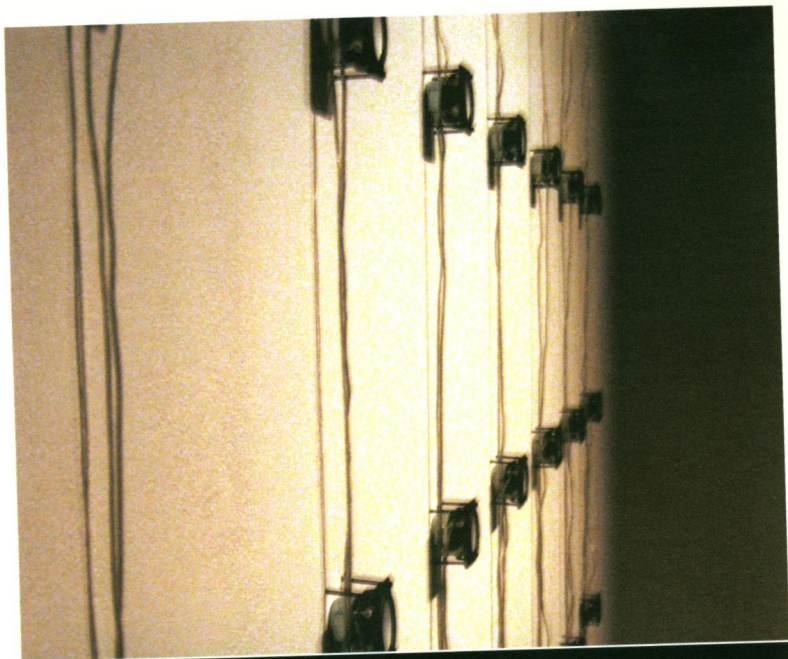
Dimensions variable

*Courtesy of the artists*

## chris kubick & anne walsh

Anne Walsh and Chris Kubick are frequent collaborators. *Art After Death*, their most well-known project, involves spiritual mediums interviewing the spirits of deceased artists such as Yves Klein and Joseph Cornell. With this project, Walsh and Kubick investigate the nature of storytelling and how the medium's performance links the audience to an imagined other dimension. For *Bay Area Now 4*, the artists present two audio-based installations drawing upon a large sound effects library typically used for film and TV production. One of these installations plays short recordings of various bullet casings falling to the ground after being fired. A continuous stream of names that correspond to each sound sample is shown simultaneously. At times, one sound is differentiated from another by text citing esoteric categories of bullets. At other times, fetishistic descriptions of the guns themselves are parts of the names. Divorced from other noises that might be heard on a soundtrack, the sound of the bullet casings dropping is delicate and magical, nothing resembling the destruction it implies. Similar to the function of the mediums in Walsh and Kubick's previous work, the viewer's role is to link the experience of the sound clips to their contrasting otherworldly names. A consistent interest in the artists' work is gauging the capacity of language systems to name sensual experience, metaphysics and other elusive subjects.





Shell casing fall, WISS P - SNIPER'S CHOICE.aif  
 Shell Casing Drops On Cement For Dp\_PE\_24.wav  
 Double Shell hit .L.aif  
 Ammunition, Small Arms. .30-06 caliber AP:Incendiary cartridge for M-1903 Springfield  
 Shell, empty Buffalo Bore 158 grain Semi-Wadcutter HP, fall.wav  
 Shell, empty Buffalo Bore for .44 magnum, best Eastwood.aif  
 Shell, empty Buffalo Bore 158 grain Semi-Wadcutter HP, fall with pop.aif  
 Shell casings, depleted uranium Phalanx gun, falls on concrete.aif  
 Shell Casing Drops On Cement For Dp\_PE\_2.wav  
 Bullet Shell Drop In Dirt 4.aif  
 Empty Shell, Buffalo Bore .38 Special, fall to floor, roll, spin.aif  
 .DS\_Store  
 Cartridge drops on linoleum, Caliber .30, Tracer; M25.aif  
 Shell casings, M249 5.56mm, Minimi Light Machine Gun, repeated drops in concrete bunker.  
 Shell, Subsonic 7.62mm cartridge for M-14 rifle, bounce, drop and roll.aif  
 Shell Casing Drops On Cement For Dp\_PE\_25.wav  
 Empty shell casing drop

*Direct Optical Interface in DIOS*

2003

Graphite and colored pencil on paper

14 x 17 in.

*Courtesy of the artist*

## frederick loomis

Conceptual artist Frederick Loomis presents his work through a fictitious personality named Edward Mathew Taylor. A visionary, Taylor is writing an entire manuscript intended to follow the Bible as the Third Testament. Its illustrated narrative outlines an apocalyptic future for the human race. *Bay Area Now 4* will feature Taylor's *Mind Maps*, which are, as Loomis describes them, "blueprints for the soul" of a new race of artificial intelligence who will eventually succeed human kind. The *Mind Maps* resemble Buddhist mandalas in that they are composed of geometric designs and algorithms meant to symbolize and lend order to the forces at play within the universe. Although Taylor's narrative carries a note of doom, it still holds the promise of salvation, for the blueprints of the soul are designed to include a recovery program that offers an antidote to evil.





*The Death Star* (working expandable model)

2005

Prosthetic material and mixed media

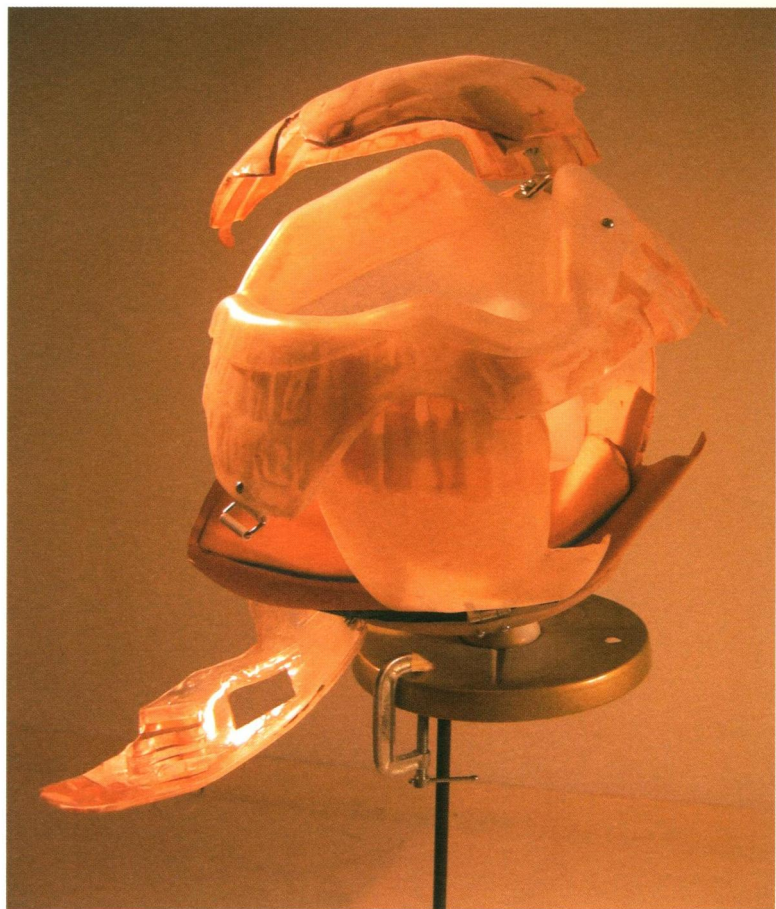
15 in. diameter (actual sculpture 48 in. diameter)

*Courtesy of the artist*

*and Gallery Paule Anglim, San Francisco*

## **michelle lopez**

Michelle Lopez uses an extraordinary range of materials and construction methods to create enigmatic sculptures. Past works have included materials as wide-ranging as leather and plastic. Lopez's sculptures bear human and animal characteristics while simultaneously evoking the cold, synthetic surfaces of toys and other mass-produced objects. For *Bay Area Now 4*, Lopez presents work inspired by a particular Death Star toy model that opens up to reveal a miniature space station within. The piece incorporates the artist's recent fascination with fabrication techniques and materials used in the construction of prosthetic limbs. It invites touch, as well as an exploration of the details found in multifaceted offerings. Its accumulation of fragments refers to both living beings and inanimate objects, serving as a reminder of things we have already known and that continue to exist around us. The work resuscitates our lived past, weaving many strands of experience into knots of memory.



*Always a Bridesmaid, Never a Bride™ Professional BridesMaid Services*  
2005

*Courtesy of the artists*

## **mail order brides/m.o.b.**

For more than ten years, Eliza "Neneng" Barrios, Reanne "Immaculata" Estrada and Jenifer "Baby" Wofford have worked collaboratively as Mail Order Brides/M.O.B., a group of Filipina American artists engaged in an ongoing investigation of culture, race and gender. Their name comes from the common misconception that Filipina women make "ideal" (submissive, obedient) brides, but "Mail Order Brides" can also be abbreviated to the provocative sequence of initials that informs the social subtext of their work. Noting the Center's close proximity to the Moscone Convention Center, M.O.B. has selected the trade show booth as an installation model for their *Bay Area Now 4* project. Their promotional literature explains their newest entrepreneurial venture—consultancy services for those looking to enter the institution of marriage:

*Surveys indicate that there is a dearth of fair and balanced professional bridesmaids, photogenic women to serve as best friend, background model and/or maidservant while remaining emotionally impartial in the actual matrimonial proceedings. Our new venture, "Always The Bridesmaid Never The Bride™," will offer the services of three "Professional BridesMaids" (or "P.B.M.s") to fulfill all requisite support duties.*

Using their *BAN 4* trade show booth as their base of business operations, the Brides will dispense their services in a series of performances taking place in and around the grounds of Yerba Buena Center for the Arts.





*Cairo Triptych (detail)*

2005

Inkjet print

36 x 146 in.

*Courtesy of the artist*

## ari marcopoulos

Ari Marcopoulos is a photographer and filmmaker whose past works have also included artist books. Marcopoulos's work reveals itself reluctantly. Pictures of the natural world are interspersed with more intimate portraits of his family members. Other photographs depict snowboard athletes biding their time in dark motel rooms between mountain assaults, or they show the residue of accidents, such as blood drips on a white bathroom floor that are reminiscent of Jackson Pollock-like splatters. A constant in Marcopoulos's photography is a rich, clear light, perhaps inspired by the artist's exposure to the luminescence of his native Holland. While other image makers may simplify their task by conducting staged photography, Marcopoulos pursues greater challenges by making work on journeys to the far reaches of the world or, in the case of his family photos, by extracting telling pictorial narratives from the constant ebb and flow of domestic life. The artist always seems to reveal the extraordinary in whatever setting he occupies. With his camera, he seeks out the transcendent meaning in what would otherwise remain prosaic. In this regard, he shares the spirit of his sometime subjects—professional snowboarders—who chase the sublime through a total surrender to the world. For *Bay Area Now 4*, the artist presents a series of photographs and an experimental travelogue film based on his late friend and recurrent subject, Craig Kelly.





*A Model of Self-Sufficiency*

2003

Pedestal, chicken wire, cornice molding, foam core and latex paint

41 x 14 x 15 in.

*Courtesy of the artist*

*and Gregory Lind Gallery, San Francisco*

## christian maychack

Christian Maychack's sculptures mutate between the recognizable and the indistinct. Their seemingly parasitic modes of growth and movement often originate from the built environment. A bulbous, multifaceted structure may protrude from a plain, white, rectangular pedestal, expanding and destroying the linearity of its right-angled host like a tumor. A geometric, crystalline form may delineate itself from a smooth stretch of wall, having left an approximated imprint behind as it lies at rest on a velvet pillow. Maychack's main sculptural project for *Bay Area Now 4* focuses on the minimalist structure of one of the gallery staircases and threatens to give it an anthropomorphic life of its own.



*Absurdist Art Collectors*

2004

Acrylic on panel

50 x 50 in.

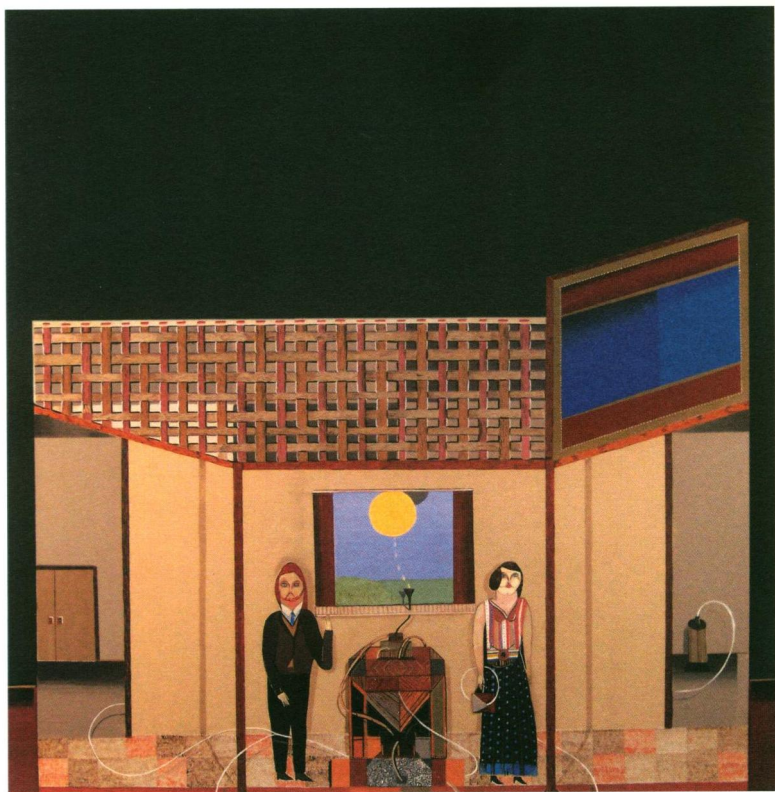
*Courtesy of the artist*

*and Jack Hanley Gallery, San Francisco*

## keegan mchargue

Keegan McHargue did not receive a formal art education. His paintings and drawings therefore do not bear the marks commonly found in works by professionally trained artists inculcated in the academic order. Instead, McHargue's work draws upon a host of pictorial references. In any given work, one can see Mesopotamian temple motifs, Celtic tracery, kimono patterns, cubist forms and Native American basket weaving designs. With this palette of decorative elements, McHargue adorns a menagerie of characters including shamans, hermaphrodites, earth and sky spirits, disembodied hands, werewolves, Mary Magdalene-like figures and more prosaic creatures such as birds and bears. Despite the opulence described above, McHargue's colors are largely muted hues of beige, sky blue and salmon on which the artist characteristically draws his fine, intricate marks in black. At times, McHargue extends his paintings and drawings directly onto the walls of the gallery to create even more layers of meaning and visual complexity. With this wide vocabulary of styles and forms, McHargue constructs narratives that are as rich and kaleidoscopic as his pictorial style.





*Castro Theatre, San Francisco, CA, 2004*

2004

C-print

24 x 20 in.

*Courtesy of the artist*

## apollonia morrill

Apollonia Morrill creates bodies of work that investigate spaces of transition and explore the accumulated evidence of human presence. Her photographic series have profiled the Transbay Transit Terminal, the primary bus depot connecting the communities of the East Bay and San Francisco, and the Castro Theatre, one of this city's oldest and most revered cinema houses. Both places are pictured as being devoid of people. Morrill spends considerable time in each location to observe their details: how light plays in the spaces and the particular ways the place assumes the marks of human use and habitation. After taking abundant pictures, the artist makes large color prints, pushing the limits of the medium to capture the light, shadow and hues of each locale. In making her pictures, Morrill also pushes the boundaries of her camera, often holding the lens so close to the objects that they become translucent blurs in the foreground of the picture plane. These phantom shapes populate Morrill's environments. The artist writes, "My photographs have to do with experiencing through seeing. In this way, they represent an intimate documentary where the charting of sites is expressed as a retinal geography rather than a strict cartography." The artist suggests that the act of seeing has deeper dimensions than merely apprehending surfaces. Morrill endows her camera with the ability to not only see, but to evoke other sensory perceptions to help the viewer comprehend the contents and spirit of a place.





*Untitled*

2005

Latex and spray paint

15 x 12 ft.

*Courtesy of The Luggage Store Gallery*

## neck face

Neck Face is the street name for a graffiti writer whose work can be seen on city streets from New York to San Francisco to Los Angeles and across the ocean in Tokyo. While in the traditional art world one gains acceptance from gatekeepers such as dealers, collectors and curators, the street artist gets visibility and renown through personal resourcefulness, effort and risk. Neck Face is the most recent rising star from the graffiti world to cross over into the mainstream art system. While the relationship of the underground artist to the mainstream is enough to remark upon, one may also ask why, out of countless graffiti artists, Neck Face has gained such notoriety. Perhaps it's a simple matter of hard work. Neck Face covers cities with his work so quickly that the whole enterprise becomes something of a massive phenomenon. The images themselves have a certain kind of straightforward teenage angst in their fascination with warring heavy-metal goth monsters, yet they also have a more sophisticated interest in color and pattern. While Neck Face's courtship with the mainstream may be fleeting and temporary, his introduction of unbridled rawness into gallery spaces is a worthy reminder of the revitalizing effects of will, energy and unmitigated candor.





*Care Package* (detail), from the series *Summer Camp*  
2003

Mixed media and sound

Dimensions variable

*Courtesy of the artist*

## sasha petrenko

The history of the western pioneer—a seeker hoping to reap wealth, self-sufficiency and freedom from a boundless landscape rich in natural resources—continues to shape the mythology of the West. Two hundred years after the fact, Sasha Petrenko traces the aftereffects of manifest destiny upon her environment. While her sculptural installations feed into this mythology, expressing the hope of finding a remote plot of land to call home, they also seem to encounter the realities of pollution, overpopulation and rising real estate costs. Her wooden construction for *Bay Area Now 4* is her largest to date, a high modernist log cabin of sorts that visitors enter through a ramp. Inside, an intricate diorama interweaves the narratives of the Petrenko family's westward migration with the adventures of the first settlers on the western frontier. Concepts of utopia and dystopia wrestle with one another in this piece, as the modernist ideal of the overarching structure is shadowed somewhat by the apocalyptic narratives depicted within it.





*Mundane Journey—18th & Harrison*  
(found architecture and color chart analysis)  
2004

*Courtesy of the artist*

## kate pocrass

Kate Pocrass produces both independent and collaborative forms of social sculpture. Her interactive projects are often communicated through instructional systems and guide maps. When followed, Pocrass's directions often reveal acts of generosity. Her *Mundane Journeys* hotline, for example, leads individuals to call a phone number (415.364.1465) and follow weekly recordings in hopes of encountering the unexpected. Callers are encouraged to ring back and report their findings. Recently, Pocrass compiled the *Mundane Journeys* expeditions into a beautifully illustrated travel guide to San Francisco, which she distributed to bookshops across the city. Various peripheral, easy-to-miss sites are profiled in the *Mundane Journeys* book, from a tree in the Panhandle that's shaped like a celery stalk to a barber in Chinatown who gives "Kirk Douglas" haircuts. During the *Bay Area Now 4* exhibition, Pocrass will lead a bus tour of San Francisco that will stop at key *Mundane Journeys* sites. The artist calls upon her passengers to nurture an eagerness to "interact with strangers in common atmospheres." As a work of social sculpture, Pocrass's project stresses the importance of seemingly quotidian moments and often overlooked observations, and the reciprocal thrill of sharing these peculiar experiences with others.





*Christopher W. Swisher*

2005

Graphite on paper

4 1/16 x 3 5/16 in.

*Courtesy of the artist*

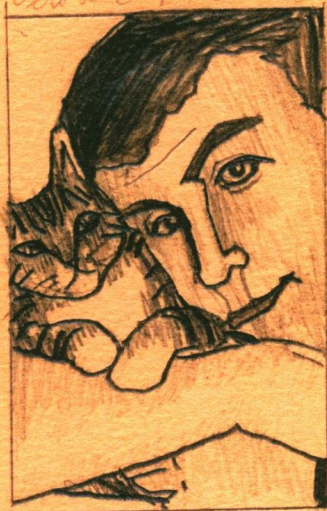
## emily prince

Emily Prince creates detailed investigations of particular systems, painstakingly mapping out her findings and observations. The process of first choosing the system and then mapping the interrelationships of its components becomes both the form and the content of the work. An ongoing wall painting at Jack Hanley Gallery shows an accumulation of colored lines that is augmented on a daily basis. Prince passes out cards containing the color spectrum to friends and acquaintances and asks them to pick a color and write down their birthday. On the specified birthday, she paints the preferred line of color on the gallery wall. The project has no clear end date, but will continue until the wall is completely covered in horizontal lines. Prince's most recent installation, showcased in *Bay Area Now 4*, makes a more pointed political statement by offering a detailed rendering of the human cost of war. She has started a memorial that contains individual hand-drawn portraits of the U.S. casualties of the war in Iraq. Rendered on four-by-five-inch sheets of paper, the graphite drawings are derived from wallet-sized portraits that families of military personnel post on an Internet memorial site. Prince has made an unconditional commitment to her memorial and will augment the installation in real time, as casualties continue to occur.

Christopher W. Switzer  
Lincoln, Nebraska

26

October 9, 2003



It's favorite place to stop was  
the Army surplus store. He admired  
the military so much, he dressed  
in camouflage clothing almost his  
entire life.



*Harvesting Oranges on 48th St.* (documentation of a social project)  
From *Temescal Amity Works*, a collaborative project with Susanne Cockrell  
2004

Photo: Susanne Cockrell

## ted purves

Ted Purves's newly authored book *What We Want Is Free: Generosity and Exchange in Recent Art* (SUNY Press, 2005) outlines the philosophy of his art practice. Central to Purves's thinking is the gift economy—the free distribution of goods and services between artists and the public—and how it is being used as a model of artistic production. The artist has embraced this gift economy with an ambitious project for *Bay Area Now 4*, an elaborate skill exchange that's loosely couched within the framework of an institutional education program. Purves's *Momentary Academy* will operate out of the Center's upstairs galleries, offering free classes to the public by artists in the exhibition. Classes will range from the purely practical to the visionary—one artist will conduct a writing seminar, while another will offer lessons on how to "sketch from the soul." The *Momentary Academy* references public programming found in traditional museum contexts but lends it a more intimate spirit, providing an environment in which artists and gallery visitors can congregate to freely share opinions, skills and ideas.





*Paula Frazer*

2004

Acrylic and oil on wood

48 x 32 in.

*Courtesy of the artist*

## **christine shields**

Christine Shields's recent paintings continue her ongoing investigation of portraiture and its ability to infuse subjects with visual splendor and richness traditionally found in classic, historical portraits of monarchs and heads of state. Previously, Shields has created complex mythologies from personal reservoirs of dreams, desires, spirits and symbols to describe that elusive space of the intimate and the ineffable. Shields's current practice is to transfer the same visual energy and regal aura of historic portraiture onto the contemporary subjects of her paintings: the artists, musicians and other associates who compose her social circle. In these portraits, the artist strives to capture the essential quality of each subject. According to Shields, both the artist and her subjects have committed their lives to exploring, nurturing and articulating innermost realities, whether through visual arts, music or some other form of creative pursuit.





*Green Room* (installation at Southern Exposure, San Francisco)  
2004

*Courtesy of the artists*

## stretcher

Stretcher is a collective of Bay Area artists and art critics who have published the online art magazine *Stretcher* ([www.stretcher.org](http://www.stretcher.org)) since 2001. As artist/publishers, Stretcher's members relate their practice to Joseph Beuys's notions of social sculpture and to Nicolas Bourriaud's thinking on relational aesthetics—social experiments that strive to connect people and create interactive, communicative experiences. For *Bay Area Now 4*, Stretcher will use the Center's Education Resource Room as their home base to conduct an installation/action project engaging criticism and conversation to enhance connectivity within the Bay Area and beyond. The Stretcher members view their artistic practice as a catalyst for artistic dialogue. They state: "A successful art publication is like an enzyme, a compound that speeds up a chemical reaction and brings about a desired response. It intensifies the quantity and quality of significant conversations within the artistic community and speeds communication between artists and their audience." The Center is fortified by such an enzyme during the *BAN 4* exhibition as host to a series of conversations and salons programmed by Stretcher that examine issues of regionalism within the context of a globalized art world, among other topics. Each event will be documented in video form within Stretcher's installation and will be available on the *Stretcher* Web site.



*Our Little Secret* (detail)

2002

Ink on paper

74 x 120 in.

*Courtesy of the artist*

*and Catharine Clark Gallery, San Francisco*

## joosephine taylor

Josephine Taylor makes large-scale drawings on paper using colored inks, pencil and gouache. These works typically depict figures engaged with one another, and at times symbolic objects are added to the narrative. Taylor's stories consistently seem to come from childhood experience, with layers of tenderness and innocence infused and interrupted by moments of pain and disturbance. In *Our Little Secret* (2002), a girl attends to two other girls in the midst of embrace. Closer inspection reveals that in the center of this expansive drawing, one girl has just nipped at the other's ear and drawn blood. Taylor's faint application of pigment and graphite makes her images look as if they may soon fade away. Every facet of her artwork is so obsessively rendered that each corner of the image commands attention despite how peripheral it may be to the main focus of the work. Heads, hands and other body parts are often shown as larger or smaller than normal scale, and they are always painstakingly rendered. These distortions and details lend the figures an extra-human quality. To whatever extent Taylor draws from individual memory, dreams or imagination, these works can be read as allegories, with each figure and circumstance symbolizing the complex entanglements of human relationships.





*Untitled* (detail from the installation/performance)

2005

*Courtesy of the artist*

## **margaret tedesco**

Margaret Tedesco's time-based works combine film/video/photography, installation and performative practice. In her live installation for *Bay Area Now 4*, the artist will narrate entire feature-length films to gallery patrons. The film's image and sound are barely perceptible to audience members, so that they need to rely instead on the narrator's interpretation to take in the action and to form a tertiary image of the story line in their own minds. The act of watching a film is transformed into a less passive experience through Tedesco's retelling: the narrator must take an active role in translating the sequence of frames into words, and audience members must utilize their imagination to transform the oral delivery back into a sequential, visual storyboard. Tedesco explores notions of identification and meaning with this project. "In the dark, we forget, submit and transport ourselves [absent from the screen] and identify with primary figures on the screen," she states. "We long to 'see the film,' but meaning is always in transit. We go with the desire to recognize ourselves in the story." Tedesco's project offers a kind of hypertext experience, an opportunity for spectator and narrator to work collaboratively in constructing new narrative possibilities for these films.



...they're sitting across each other at a table in a coffee shop  
 she has a blond beehive hairdo, flowered print shirt,  
 large dark sunglasses covering up most of her face, she's smoking  
 he adjusts his heavy-rimmed glasses, gesturing rapidly as he speaks  
 his hair is balding  
 the waitress brings him a glass of milk, she has a cup of coffee  
 distracted, she looks out the window to the parking lot  
 she notices two men have followed them  
 the two men are checking out their car, one is holding a baseball bat  
 they quickly jump up throw some cash down on the table  
 take off running through the kitchen  
 out a back door that opens onto an open field  
 they are running frantically to get away  
 they stop to argue, decide to climb down a steep hill  
 the tall field camouflages them  
 the two men are smashing up the windows of the car they left behind  
 they continue to run, confused about direction  
 they finally arrive at a clearing on the shore of a river  
 standing alone on the horizon is a masked man in a superman suit  
 they approach him...



*Priceless #1*

2004

Lightjet print

24 x 30 in.

*Courtesy of the artist*

*and Lisa Dent Gallery, San Francisco*

## **hank willis thomas**

Statistics and the media have a way of creating lifeless clichés. Hank Willis Thomas throws himself and his artistic practice right into the middle of this quandary. As a young African American man, certain aspects of Thomas's personal experience are often rendered a hackneyed story by the overrepresentation and impersonal machinations of the media environment. In his past works, Thomas has attempted to turn this process on its head. In one example, the famous Michael Jordan "jumpman" Nike logo has been altered so that the figure extends a gun in its hand rather than a basketball. Thomas has also taken the Timberland tree and added a hanging figure to suggest the scene of a lynching. To these sanitized corporate logos Thomas has reattached history and the epidemic violence related to the class of young African American consumers to whom these products are heavily marketed and sold. In his current collaboration with artist Kambui Olujimi, Thomas's work takes on an even more personal tone. The senseless and tragic murder of his own cousin is made into a short film told through stop-motion animation. By introducing a visual language associated with cartoon fiction, Thomas reenacts the moment of his cousin's death with the detached media gaze that too often represents these recurrent tragic episodes.

3-piece suit: \$250

new socks: \$2

9mm Pistol: \$79

gold chain: \$400

Bullet: €60

Picking the perfect casket for your son:

priceless.



*Roswell Drawing (detail)*

2004

Mixed media on paper

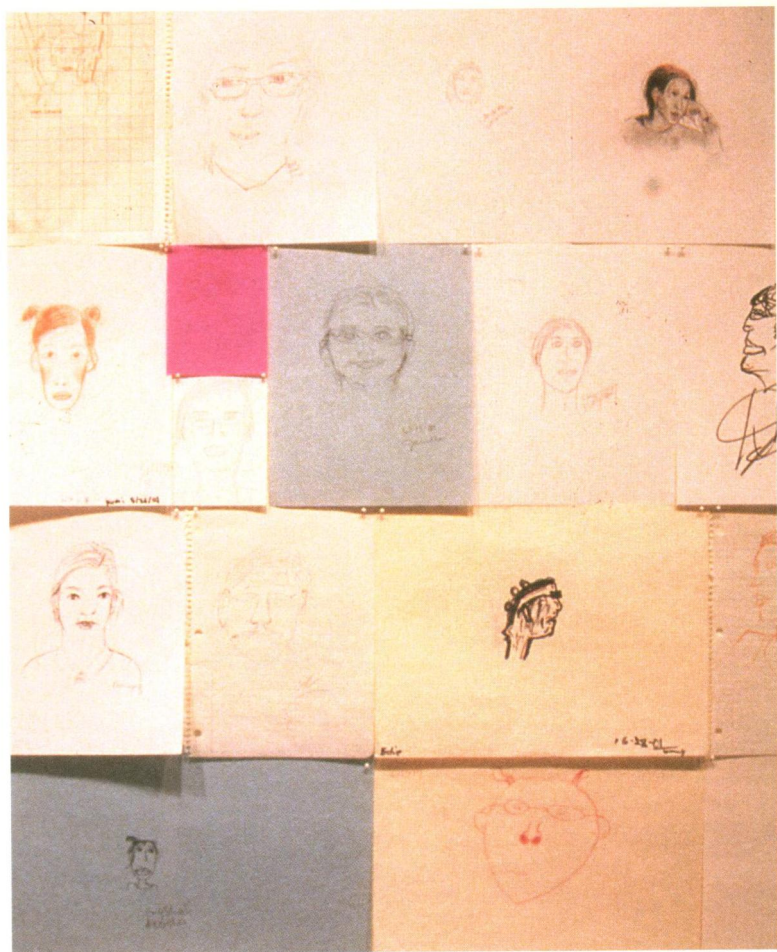
8 x 50 ft.

*Courtesy of the artist*

## edie tsong

Before moving to the Bay Area, many of Edie Tsong's early works took place in homogenous communities in middle America, where the true ethnic diversity of the nation is not evident. Tsong staged performances where she paraded through streets wearing a Miss America outfit and an ungainly blond wig. This work playfully addressed assumptions about who and what constitute the image of America. Regarding the exhibition project *Telecommunity Portrait*, the artist states that her focus on identity has developed into an interest in conceptual portraiture, an exploration of identity as decentralized and unfixed, mutating with memory and one's interaction with the environment, the media and other people. In this work, a video conference system is placed in the gallery as well as the artist's studio to enable the viewer and Tsong to create portraits of each other. A fax machine is also installed in the gallery for the artist to send her drawing to the viewer. The portrait of Tsong made by the gallery visitor is hung on an adjacent wall. Over the course of the exhibition, the drawings of Tsong will grow to be a wall of portraits made by a variety of people. This interactive work echoes the themes of Tsong's Miss America performances by asserting that one's identity, national, individual or otherwise, is an open question negotiated through interactions with others.





*Black and White* (detail)

2004

Hand-stitched cotton

80 x 60 x 17 in.

*Courtesy of the artist*

*and Lizabeth Oliveria Gallery, Los Angeles*

## anna von mertens

The stitches that hold together sculptor Anna Von Mertens's hand-dyed abstract quilts diagram mapping systems, scientific phenomena and forms of knowledge both intimate and institutional. A recent diptych titled *Black and White* contains delicate threads that delineate the energy patterns of a nuclear explosion, the mushroom cloud's perfect symmetry offering a surreal contrast to the chaos and annihilation instigated by its detonation. Von Mertens's two new works for *Bay Area Now 4* show a further interest in investigating the physics of dispersed energy. The stitches on one sculpture depict an AutoCAD drawing of the scatter pattern of an exploding military tank, while the other sculpture focuses on the vanishing point of a hundred straight white lines that appear to simultaneously implode and explode in an optical illusion. Von Mertens translates the concept of thermodynamic entropy—the theory that everything moves spontaneously in the direction of maximum chaos or disorder—into our current place and time in the globalized world, where everything is growing closer together as it drifts farther apart.

